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T H E
W O R K S

Of the late REVEREND

Mr ROBERT RICCALTOUN,

Minister of the Gospel at Hobkirk.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

NEVER BEFORE PRINTED.

Notes IV-16
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CONTAINING

A treatise on the General Plan of REVE-
LATION,

AND

The CHRISTIAN LIFE; or, Disserta-
tions on Galatians ii. 20.

EDINBURGH:

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A
T R E A T I S E
on the GENERAL PLAN of
R E V E L A T I O N.

CHAPTER I.

Revelation founded on Fact.

THE wisdom of the first ages, for more than two thousand years; consisted in a manner entirely in the knowledge, or rather the belief, of certain facts handed down from one generation to another. Upon these their sentiments, and consequently their affections and passions, were formed: and thence the whole of their religion, and what is now called *morality*, the whole of their conduct, both in relation to God and their neighbour, was regulated and directed.

It can hardly be imagined, that any traditions, [however authentic in their ori-

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A

ginal,

ginal, could be conveyed through such hands as even the best of men are, without some very material alterations. And accordingly two provisions were made for their preservation: *first*, The longevity of the first men, and the frequent familiar appearances of celestial beings to, and conversations with them; to which may be added, the rites and observances of their religious worship, until the wise director of all found it proper to reduce them into writing, begun by Moses, carried on from time to time by the prophets, and finished by Jesus Christ and his apostles; and, *secondly*, A people separated from the rest of mankind, and invested with very distinguishing privileges, for this very end, to be witnesses for God, and to preserve in their purity those divine oracles, which were committed to them with such circumstances as could leave no doubt of their divine original, and the authority by which they were established, such as never attended any other facts whatsoever; and that nation was so wisely placed in the midst of the then habitable world, and the neighbourhood of those states which had extended their trade and navigation farthest, that

all the inhabitants of the earth had, or might have had, easy access to recover the truth of their traditions, however they might have been corrupted, or even altogether lost.

In fact, we find that this was the way which the ancient Greeks took for acquiring knowledge. Travelling was their best course of education; and their travels lay all one way. Egypt, and the neighbourhood of Canaan, were the places they frequented; and he who could give the best account of their traditions, was the wisest man. And thence, we have good reason to think, these vestiges of truth were taken which are so much admired in ancient writings. Thus, however, things went on, until a generation of men arose, who, assuming the then modest name of *philosophers*, and scorning to take any thing upon trust, would needs fall a-reasoning, as they called it, on facts greatly above their reach, and where they could have no *data* to support them. In consequence whereof, the principal facts were either rejected as impossible, or explained away into a consistency with their own low and mistaken notions or imaginations. Thus,

professing themselves wise, they became fools; and the knowledge of the true God, and of all the concerns of the spiritual and eternal world, was in effect totally lost; insomuch that the very writings of Moses and the prophets were, by the generality of that people to whom they were committed, greatly perverted from their original intention, and made void by their foolish traditions.

Such was the unhappy state of mankind when Jesus Christ came into the world; who, by himself, and his disciples, so fully vindicated the original truth, that now, one would have thought, there was effectual provision made against all corruptions and abuses for ever; especially when these standards of sacred truth came to be translated into vulgar tongues, and lodged in every hand. Thus, we are told, the primitive Christians, contenting themselves with the simplicity of faith, made it their sole business to improve the facts which they believed; to form their hearts and lives upon them, into a conversation becoming the gospel of Christ, which comprehended them all, and set them in their proper light.

But

But many ages had not passed, until the same sort of men treated the written revelation much in the same manner as their predecessors had done the traditional one; and setting out as they did, upon this very fallacious principle, That no man can believe what he does not understand, or understand any thing of which he has not clear and distinct *ideas*, as the images we form of external objects are called, they found themselves obliged, either flatly to deny, or explain away the most momentous facts, however strongly supported, on which Christianity, or indeed any religion, can stand. It is palpably certain, that we can have no idea at all, much less a clear and distinct one, of any thing, but what we can imagine, or form some image of; and that cannot possibly go any further than material objects, whatever notions or conceptions we may form by description, or analogy and resemblance; and where these fail, there should be an end both of our knowledge and our faith, and a strong foundation laid for setting aside all the numerous singular facts recorded in the holy scriptures, and even that on which all religion rests, the
being

being of a God, who is the creator and proprietor of all things in heaven and earth.

Our modern philosophers indeed, taking the advantage of that light which revelation has given, undertake boldly, not only to discover the being of God, but to make out a complete character of him in all his perfections, with all the evidence of demonstration. And it must be acknowledged, they have said many plausible things. But as the belief of some being which is called *God* has been in the world ever since there were men in it, all that is left for them is, to try what can be said for or against it. This is a quite different thing from finding out a fact altogether unknown; a province that reason was never made for; and which indeed cannot possibly be done, but by bringing it some how under our observation; and that cannot be done, but either by bringing it within the reach of our perceptive powers, or by the information of others: and when the most momentous facts on which the proper evidence of the divine being and distinguishing character rests, are considered, they will be found to be

be such as none but himself could either know, or give information about.

I may not insist here on a presumption, which yet carries stronger conviction against their pretensions, than all their reasonings and demonstrations can ever do for them, viz. That the united attempts of all the very great men who had not access to the written record, could never bring, not to say the world, but even any one of themselves, to any tolerable knowledge of the true God. The highest of their attainment was, to ascribe the traditional epithets of *Optimus Maximus*, the best and greatest, to what they called *God*. But who or what that being was, or even what true goodness and greatness are, neither they, nor any of their modern successors, have ever been able to say, without assuming a fact which they could never have known, or imagined, unless they had been told of it, viz. that this universe, with all the fullness of it, was once nothing, and had no being until he gave it, and made every thing there to be what it is: A fact so singular in its nature, and which required a kind of power so infinitely above what is known to man, and

and which so far surpasses all human apprehension; that there is no imaginable way by which so much as a suspicion of it could ever have entered into any one's head; nor could any proper information be given about it, but by the creator himself: and yet upon this supposition all their reasonings are founded which have any weight, or that can make any lasting impression.

It is true, there have been very high pretensions made to religion, and even devotion; on these principles; not only by those who could know no better, but by those among ourselves who certainly might. A noted late writer has given us what I think so just an account of this, that I chuse to deliver it in his own words.

“ Philosophical devotion, like the enthusiasm of a poet, is the transitory effect
“ of high spirits, great leisure, a fine genius, and a habit of study and contemplation. But, notwithstanding all
“ these circumstances, an abstracted invincible object, like that which natural religion alone presents us, cannot long
“ actuate the mind, or be of any great
“ moment in life. To render the passion
“ of

“ of continuance, we must find some method of affecting the senses and imagination, and must embrace some historical as well as philosophical account of the Divinity.” Not one of a thousand, I believe I may say a million, of mankind, can be found capable of entering into the metaphysical refinements they build on. The multitude must live either by sense or faith; and either continue quite ignorant of the Deity, or make out his character as they do that of men whom they never saw; that is, by his works and ways: and if they have not a true history of these, they will be sure to make one for themselves, as fully appears by the gross conceits and foolish legends of the acts of what they called their *Gods*, made and propagated not only in the Heathen, but some other places of the world.

But however this disposition may be abused, it is by no means to be reckoned among the corruptions, or even infirmities, of the human nature; but the distinguishing characteristic of that constitution our wise creator saw fit to assign us, for answering the purposes for which he designed us in his world; and which, accordingly, he

initiates every one of us into, by the way in which we enter there; where, incapable for a long time of judging or acting for ourselves, a great part of our lives must necessarily be spent in an implicit faith in, and dependence upon, those to whose care we are committed: nay, after all the observations we can make for ourselves, even in the highest state of improvement, we would find ourselves but very ill provided, even for living in a present world, were it not for the informations we receive from others. But how shall we attain the knowledge of the invisible God, whom no man hath seen or can see? And how can he manifest himself to us, but by such works and ways as we are capable of perceiving, and by which we may be enabled to form some proper apprehensions of his being and perfections? A true and authentic history of these must therefore be the best gift that can be made to creatures in our circumstances.

Such a history of God we have in the Bible; and they mistake it greatly who consider it in any other light. Whatever accounts we have either of nations and kingdoms, or of particular men, were not designed to give us their history, but only

only so much of it as was necessary to set God's ways with them in such a light, as that we might learn from those instances, what to think of *him*, and what we have to hope or fear from him in similar circumstances. All the facts we have there recorded are not indeed of equal moment; but none of them may be deemed superfluous. Some capital ones there are, without which, God cannot be known at all. But others contribute to the more perfect knowledge of him, and all together make up a system of perfect wisdom, and naturally lead to the great discovery of what all the philosophers and wise men, ancient and modern, have laboured in vain to find out, viz. where the true perfection and happiness of mankind lies; for these two can never subsist separately. But then it must be adverted to, that none of these facts must be taken separately, and without taking in the whole. Attempts of this kind have misled many. There is not only a close connection, but such a beautiful order and dependence, that one fact supports and opens the mind to conceive another, which by itself might have seemed absolutely incredible. Of this there are

numberless instances, which I may not enter upon here; some will occur as we go along.

In the knowledge, belief, and proper improvement, of these facts, the whole of Christianity consists. A plain simple thing, which needs no philosophy or human science to support its principles. There is not in the whole Bible one single instance of that kind of reasoning. Much and strong reasoning we do indeed find there; but all of a quite different kind. It is all employed, either in supporting the truth of the facts, or enforcing the proper consequences and improvement of them. And it had been much to be wished, that those who have employed themselves in the great and laudable design of opening the scriptures, had guarded more carefully than has been generally done, against those mixtures of human wisdom which we find so frequently and strongly cautioned against by our Lord and his apostles, by which the simplicity and beauty of the truth as it is in Jesus have been at least greatly sullied and obscured, Christianity moulded into the form of an human science, a wide door opened for numberless unnecessary, and many of them endless,

less, debates and controversies, the true spirit of it lost in bitter contentions and divisions, and mens faith drawn off from the only foundation on which it can stand, the testimony of God, to build on the guesses or bold assertions of the reasoners and disputers of this world.

And yet such is the tyranny of custom and received opinions, that many learned and good men have thought, that natural religion, as the philosophical is pretended very unjustly to be, is the only foundation on which Christianity can stand: for, say they, how can we know any thing to be a divine revelation, or receive it as such, until we know there is a God; nay, till we know so much of his nature and perfections as shall qualify us to judge; what is worthy of him, and what not? Without this, we lie open to every impostor or deluded enthusiast who shall take it into his head to pretend a divine commission, and his reveries may pass with us for divine oracles.

Need I observe, what is so glaringly evident, that this is so far from sending us to learn our knowledge of God from the scriptures of truth, that these can be of

no use, until we are taught it by some philosopher or other, on principles too not only different from, but in many instances opposite to, those we are taught in the Bible, and which must be unlearned and renounced before one can become a Christian? For however the worldly sanctuary might be built and beautified with the spoils of the Egyptians, the heavenly one admits of no such materials. We may not believe the Bible until we know that it is the word of God; and it is certain no man ever will; but then, before we can be determined in this great point, we must not only know that there is some being we call *God*, but we must know the true God. Nor will even this be of any use to us, until we know certainly that this is his testimony; and there our faith is supposed to rest. But however we may be supposed to rest our belief of the particular facts recorded there on the testimony of God; yet it is plain, that this belief is ultimately, and not very remotely, founded on what we learned before we could believe a word that is spoken there. God, by the prophet Jeremy, gives a very different solution of this interesting question.

stion. "He that hath a dream, let him
 "tell a dream; and he that hath my word,
 "let him speak my word boldly: what
 "is the chaff to the wheat? Is not my
 "word like a fire? like a hammer which
 "breaketh the rocks afunder?" Jer. xxiii.

28. 29. The Apostle Paul, who spake by the same Spirit, speaks also the same language, and resolves the Christian faith, not into the *wisdom of words*, or human reasoning, which he carefully avoided; but into the *demonstration of the Spirit, and of power*. But this is a kind of evidence that no man can perceive but he that feels it. Nor is that a singular case: for the light of the sun, and the noise and variety of sounds, to both which we find it compared, are precisely of the same kind; and as the great creator manifests his glory to whom and in what measure he pleases, he can with the greatest ease make them perceive and feel what the blind and deaf can have no notion of.

Certain it is, however, that in the whole Bible, from the beginning to the end of it, the question is never so much as insinuated, Whether there is a God or not? nor any such thing offered as philosophers call a
 proof

proof or a demonstration of it. But there is a much easier and incomparably more effectual method taken for establishing this momentous and fundamental truth. By manifesting himself, as he does, in his works and ways, and thus showing what he is, he effectually ascertains the truth of his being, not only to the understanding, as philosophers attempt to do; but to the conscience, the inward sense and feeling of men. The very first sentence of that divine record reveals a fact which all the wisdom of man could never have discovered, and which no philosopher will ever be able to demonstrate, even when it is known: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." A fact, without which, all reasoning from the works of God must go for nothing, as they must do, until it is ascertained that they are really his. But when it is, we are provided with the most sensible documents of his eternal power and godhead, such as must fill every heart with reverence and adoration who really believes it.

The divine author knew perfectly how hard it is for creatures such as we are, to believe a fact every way so singular, and
so

so infinitely above all the powers that we can have any notion of. For preventing what was thought a very plausible notion, that creating was no more but reducing the confused heap of matter into that beautiful order in which we now find it, he tells us, that after his creating the heavens and the earth, the matter remained still in the greatest confusion, until it was, by degrees, which none but the creator himself could describe, reduced to regularity and order. And, which made the wonderful work yet more wonderful, all was performed without either instruments or means, but purely by an authoritative word, or a mere act of his will.

This must stand an invincible argument, That the creation of all things depends purely on the credit of divine testimony, unless a satisfying account can be given how such a history of it could be made by man. And the more attempts are made this way, the more I am satisfied will the evidence of it appear. By the circumstances we have recorded of the creator's familiar intercourse with the first man, we have reason to believe, he was very thoroughly instructed in all he was ca-

pable of knowing about it. But, in the course of time, it came to be so much either forgotten or neglected, and the blindness and folly of man become so rampant, that not only the works of God, the powers of the heavens, but their own imaginations and fancies were set up to rival the creator in his Deity and worship: A monstrous wickedness in them; but from which mankind reaped very great advantages, as it gave occasion to those numerous exertions of divine power, whereby God confounded the idolaters, and instructed his being the creator of heaven and earth, and thereby his deity and absolute power, or, as the Apostle expresses it, "his eternal power and godhead." It would be of great use to observe, what would take up too much room here, how the contest was carried on with the apostate world in general, and particularly with the Israelitish nation down to the captivity, with the strongest means of conviction on one side, and the most astonishing perverseness on the other.

It was never disputed, that the creator of all things, if there was any such, was the true God; and himself puts it on this issue:

issue: "The gods who have not created
"the heavens and the earth, shall perish
"from the earth." There is another posi-
tion laid down as indisputable, That he who
has in his own hand all the power that is
in the universe, must be the creator, and
the true God: and that all power in hea-
ven and earth are thus in the hand of
God, he has instructed by the most pal-
pable and most convincing evidence, do-
ing what none but the possessor of al-
mighty power could do, and shewing
such perfect knowledge of all things, as
none but he who made all things could
possibly attain.

Thus he has shown, in a manner that
might be perceived even by the most stu-
pid observers, that all the powers of what
is called *nature*, are so absolutely in his
possession, that he can controul them at
pleasure, suspend, and even invert them,
for answering any purposes for which he
sees fit to employ them. We may not
stand particularly to observe how effec-
tually this was done in the destruction
and restoration of the earth at the general
deluge; the destruction of Sodom, and
the other cities of that plain, which was
like

like the garden of God; the astonishing plagues of Egypt; the opening a passage for the Israelites through the Red sea; the pillar of fire and cloud; giving them manna for food, and water out of the rock; with all the wonders at Sinai; stopping the course of the sun; or, what argues an equal, if not a superior exertion of power, the course of the light, as in the case of Joshua, Hezekiah, and others; Elijah's contest with the priests of Baal; and the more ordinary fire from heaven consuming the accepted sacrifices. To which must be added, all the miracles recorded in the Old and New Testaments, which stand as so many sensible documents of creating power.

But the Israelitish nation itself was the greatest miracle of all. From their first separation from the nations in their father Abraham, down to the captivity; and, we may add, down to this very day; they were, and are, standing monuments of the creator's power; and that not only over inanimate matter, but over nations and kingdoms, the counsels, purposes, and powers of men, even in those which are allowed to be their freest and most deliberate

berate actions; turning them and employing them so as to answer his purposes and intentions; raising up and casting down at pleasure unto all the ends of the earth. The prosperity and adversity of that nation exactly conform to the promises and threatenings of their law; the strengthening the hands of their enemies, and destroying them at pleasure; and the numberless instances of his determining the hearts of men to serve his purposes, are all of them instances of the surprising power of the great creator; and prove, that "the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof:" for he giveth it, and all the kingdoms of it, to whomsoever he will. And that none may imagine that these things come to pass by what is called chance, or the common course of things, he beforehand tells what he is to do, and thus secures the honour of it entirely to himself; not to say that in most of these events the hand of God is so visible, that it cannot be mistaken.

There is yet another point which we find the creator himself appealing to as decisive in this case: it is his perfect knowledge, not only of the present state of

of things, but of all that is passed and forgotten among men, and of all that ever shall be unto the end of time. Instances we have of both kinds in the facts recorded by Moses, and the many prophecies which have been fulfilled, and many more which relate to events yet to fall out in their proper time. And thus we find him pleading against the idols of the nations, and their thoughtless votaries: "Bring forth your strong reasons, saith the God of Jacob. Let them bring forth, and shew us what shall happen: let them shew the former things, that we may consider them.—Shew the things which are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods," Is. xli. 21. 22, 23. This, it is evident, cannot be done but upon one of two suppositions; either that all things are under his direction and disposal, or that he hath such a perfect knowledge of them, that he can certainly say what effects will follow. In either case, such power and knowledge can belong to none but the creator.

At the same time that we have this great foundation of all religion attested by such plain and palpable evidence, we have

have another advantage: by having a power so analogous and similar to that by which the worlds were created, brought under our observation, the belief of creation is greatly facilitated; as it effectually removes that prejudice which is somehow become in a manner natural, against believing any effects of power to which we have never observed any thing similar: and further, by unquestioned instances of similar powers, and very nearly of the same kind, the mind is in an easy, and almost insensible manner, led up to the justest notions of that God we profess to worship, as a being essentially possessed of perfect and absolute power, not to be controlled by any, or all other powers put together. And thus, in that ancient Christian creed bearing the name of the Apostles, the article, *I believe in God the Father almighty*, stands without any other addition but the ground on which it is believed, *the maker of heaven and earth*.

Our modern wise men, alarmed, as would seem, by the dreadful consequences of absolute power lodged in a weak fallible man, have raised a horrible cry against ascribing it to God, and given it
names

names which I do not chuse to repeat. But had they adverted to a very obvious truth, That all imperfection whatsoever is owing entirely to the want of power, they would easily have seen, that perfect or absolute power and absolute perfection are but different words for the very same thing. The distinction between what they call natural and moral perfections, whatever foundation it may have in created constitutions, can by no means apply to him in whom all perfections are equally essential, however the weakness of our apprehensions may lead us to conceive of them.

C H A P. II.

Ignorance of Abstract Nature. Ignorance of Divine Nature, Power, or Works. Knowledge conveyed by Images. The true state of Creature-dependence.

BUT after all, however strong the evidences of this great truth are, and they are indeed the strongest which creatures of our kind are capable of receiving, the

the thing itself remains an impenetrable mystery, how a world, such as this, could be brought into being, when there were no materials either to work upon, or to work by: and yet more, that it should be done by the bare word, or rather the bare will, of the creator. This is a secret which must for ever remain with him who is perfect in understanding, and who alone can know the extent of his own power. And yet the eternity of the world, or even of the matter of which it consists, would be still as inconceivable, and consequently as great, or rather a greater mystery, and therefore as hard to be believed: only with this difference, that the existence of the material world is more obvious than that of the invisible creator.

This naturally leads us into depths, if possible, still greater, the impenetrable secrets of the divine being: He created the heavens and the earth, and that gave a beginning to them, and to what we call time, by which their duration or continuance in being is computed. But the creator himself then was: nay, infinitely beyond the utmost distance that can be imagined,

magined, he did exist. Accordingly it is said of him, Is. lvii. 15. that "he inhabiteth eternity;" and by the Apostle, 1 Tim. vi. 16. "He only hath immortality;" which last expression excludes, not only end of being, but all not-being. But who can reach the full import of these words? The distinguishing name by which he chose to be known in the first ages, JEHOVAH, is with good reason thought to express his very essence; and his answer to Moses, when he wanted to know his name, is a sort of paraphrase of it; which the Apostle John renders, *He that is, and was, and is to come.* And thus it comes out, as if he had said, *I am he that is, or, he who is being;* and that is something more than to say, he is the sole proprietor and possessor of being; it imports, that being is his very essence. Much to the same purpose is the title we find him so often assuming of, *The Living God*; not only to distinguish himself from dead idols, but especially to set himself forth to our faith, as the absolute proprietor, and therefore the only spring and fountain of life, as well as of being. And thus we find our Lord giving it as the

the distinguishing character of the true God, "That he hath life in himself."

Thus we are provided in a set of words, very important indeed, and full of instruction, were they well understood, and which we use as freely as if we really did understand them. Life and being are such familiar terms, that, I believe, there are not a few men in the world who would think themselves greatly affronted, if there was so much as a suspicion insinuated, that they did not comprehend what they were speaking of. By this pittance of being and life which we find ourselves one way or other in possession of, we come to know something what it is to be, and to live. But these are only the effects and consequences of life and being; and what they are in themselves, and how even our own life and being are maintained and supported, we know no more than the child which never had a thought: A strong presumption, or rather a certain document, that all must be resolved into the inexplicable and incomprehensible exertion of creating power. And if all continues a mystery there, so near home, how much more mysterious must the essence and manner of subsisting

be in him who dwells in light inaccessible, which no man can approach unto.

The narrowness and short extent of the human capacity might easily be, and often has been, carried much farther, and inexplicable mysteries found, throughout the whole frame of even the material world; and, what is nearest us, our own frame and constitution; insomuch that philosophers to this day have never been able to say what matter is, or what our souls are, or how they come to be united to these gross bodies. It must appear very odd, that men should with such confidence deny the belief of *mysteries*, or such things as they can make no account of, when they themselves are without any scruple assenting to mysteries every day they live. But most strange it is, that any who believe that the worlds were created by the word of God, and the eternity and immensity of his being, should yet boggle at the information given us concerning the manner in which that incomprehensible being subsists, which has nothing more of mystery, or less intelligible; I mean, a trinity of distinct agents in

in the unity of the divine essence, subsisting and acting in and by one another.

It can be no just prejudice against the firmest belief of this, that we have nothing similar within the compass of our observation that we can image it by: for it is no more singular than these other facts which we have no doubt about, viz. the immensity of the divine being, and creating power; and is instructed precisely in the same manner by facts which fall easily under our observation, and the record we have concerning them; where we find Three, very expressly distinguished from one another, dignified with all the divine names, titles, attributes, and honours, and all the works, not excepting creation itself, by which the only true God has chosen to distinguish himself, and make himself known to men. Or shall we believe, that a perfectly wise and good being would lay such a snare for misleading his creatures, and drawing them into a crime he has expressed such an abhorrence of, the setting up other gods before him?

But the main prejudice which has had the greatest share in biasing numbers against

gainst the belief of this mystery, will, I apprehend, be found to arise from the imperfection of our language, and the terms in which it is expressed there. The word *God*, in our language, has no determinate signification; but, like the proper names of men, is made use of to denote that being whom we profess to worship. *Person* again, in vulgar, and even philosophical language, denotes one individual agent. This makes it very hard to avoid apprehending three persons as three gods. The Hebrews had greatly the advantage of us in this respect. They had a name, JEHOVAH, which denominated the divine essence, and is always singular, and this JEHOVAH is always declared to be one. But they had another name, which denoted the relation which he condescended to stand in to his creatures of mankind, and expresseth the obligation he had taken upon himself to make good the promises which he had made them, and which we know were to be fulfilled by the Word and Spirit, as well as by the Father: and this has constantly a plural termination, *Elabim*; not for want of a singular term, which the author of it could never have been at a loss for, and which it is not conceivable

ceivable he would have chosen in his addresses to a people so prone to fall into idolatry and polytheism as the old Israelites were, had it not been to express an important truth, that though *Jehovah* the essence is one, yet the *Elahim* are more than one.

But neither will it be found strictly true, that there is nothing in nature any way resembling this mystery; though it should be enough to make it credible, that there is nothing found there that can warrant us to conclude it impossible. This material system, and the material powers and under-agents by which the order the wise creator has appointed is supported and maintained, we have great reason to believe, was designed for a representation of the spiritual unseen world, and of that (to us inconceivable) order by which all things are carried on there; upon this general principle, that what the sun is to the material, the same God is to the spiritual world. And upon this the whole of the descriptive language we have of spiritual and unseen things, is in great measure formed; and by a very natural analogy, all our conceptions of these things are likewise formed. What Moses calls

Illustration of the Trinity by comparison

calls by a name which we render *expansion*, or *firmament*, and which from him we learn is the matter of the material heavens, most perfect wisdom has formed into a most stupendous machine, by which all things throughout the system are managed and carried on in their proper order. We see it, and very sensibly feel it is so in this earth of ours. We cannot subsist a moment without air to breathe in; and were the compression it makes taken off, we know, by easy experiments, how the earth itself must be dissipated, and every thing dissolved into that state of confusion in which the whole matter of the universe was originally created, when the earth was without form, and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep. Were it even possible that air could subsist without light, we certainly know it could answer none of those purposes, nor produce those vicissitudes and changes which we find so necessary for adorning the earth, as it is every season, and for making it useful to the inhabitants. We know as well, that there can be no light but what issues from, and is sent forth by the force of, fire, and that that cannot be supported but by a flux of air continually streaming into

into it; and which is so lost there, that no account can be made of it, but that it is refined there, and thrown out again in the form of light; which again, by degrees, coalesces into such grumes as constitute air, Thus this wonderful machine supports itself and every thing else. The sun, or fire at its orb, is the great regulator, but operates only by the light it sends forth, and is supported and maintained by the air which is formed out of it. The matter is the same; but their form and distinct offices sensibly distinguish them; and thus subsist and act in perfect union, in and by one another.

When we compare this, and the effects produced by this wonderful combination, with the accounts we have made, in language formed upon it, of the nature and operations of the great creator, it will not be easy for any one to avoid concluding, that in these material under-agents he designed to give us a sensible image of himself, and the way in which he exerts his almighty power. Our God dwells in light inaccessible, which no man can approach unto: and we are told expressly, that he is a consuming fire. His eternal Word

manifested in the person of Jesus Christ is almost every where styled, *The Light of the world*; and by him it is that every thing is done which the Father does. The original languages have but one name for the material air, and that eternal Spirit by whom the Father and the Word perform and finish all their operations on the creature.

There can hardly be a greater and more dangerous imposition upon ourselves and others, than the attempting to reduce these analogical descriptions of spiritual and unseen things, by which only we can come at any conceptions of them at all, to so many metaphors, such as the masters of human eloquence use for embellishing their discourses. So far from it, that they are not only different in kind, but very nearly opposite to, and inconsistent with, one another. If both the terms of a metaphor are not perfectly known, the brilliancy and force of it is entirely lost. Here it is just the reverse. What is meant to be discovered in this way, is altogether unknown; neither can it be known any other way than by the image which represents it, and by which we may

may be helped to form such conceptions as the imperfection of our constitution can admit of; and we have proper directions given us how to avoid the abuse of such images, and forming unworthy notions of what they were employed to represent.

It is not at all needful, that the plain Christian should be perplexed with the many curious speculations and disputes which men of learning and leisure have raised on this head of creation, and the consequences of it; but there is one which must by no means be neglected, viz. the nature and consequences of creature-dependence, as there is no one thing of more general use on every occasion throughout all the stages of the Christian life. And were not our minds some how or other biassed and prepossessed, we must have been naturally led to think, that nothing can preserve a creature in life and being but the same power that first bestowed them. Indeed, being and life are none of those things that can be given away, but must remain in the hand of the only proprietor: and yet such is the lust after independency, that many have per-

suaded themselves, that they cannot be dispossessed, but by an exertion of power equal to that of creation; nay, and that they cannot be justly deprived of these, unless they forfeit them by some crime or other. And it is on this slippery bottom that all the philosophers hopes are founded. But they might have been better taught, had they condescended to observe, what cannot escape the notice of the most ignorant, and which the wise creator has set as a check to our pride and self-conceit, viz. that wise order he has fixed, that no creature can subsist in life but by those means which he has ordained, and which he blesses for that purpose. We must be very inadvertent, if we do not perceive, that those upon which we so sensibly feel our dependence, and especially the mechanism of the heavens, are only the under-agents, or the instruments by which the creator exerts that supporting power, without which we cannot sustain ourselves for a moment.

This will appear yet more evident, when it is considered, that the whole of creation is a matter of pure grace; that is, of absolute will and pleasure. The
word

word *grace* has been some how, especially of late, so appropriated to that merciful kindness manifested to sinners in Jesus Christ, that some have thought it a sort of profanation to apply it to any thing else. But we have greatly better authority for extending it to every favour, or instance of kindness, that the creator freely confers on any creature capable of observing and being affected with it; and for such, we are well enough instructed to say, the world was made. In its natural import, it expresses not only the spring and fountain of the divine beneficence, (for nothing can be called grace which is not sovereignly free), but likewise the fruit and effect of it; that is, the putting forth such a measure of power as makes good the intention or declaration of grace: I say, the declaration and intention; because a gift freely given, without any previous declaration, is just as truly a grace or favour, as if it had been given in consequence of the most solemn promise. And thus it coincides with what is commonly called the *blessing* of God, another common word, little understood, I am afraid, or little minded. Mens blessing one another is a kind of image

mage of it. In its lowest sense, it is a signification of great good-will and hearty kindness and affection. But if it is not seconded with kind offices to the utmost of one's power, all the good words will hardly be allowed to be indications of a kind intention. And where then can the excellency of the divine blessing lie, but in that divine power which actually conveys the blessing? and therefore they whom he condescends to bless, are blessed indeed. I believe there is not one man in his wits who will not readily acknowledge, that the conservation of the universe, and of every creature therein, is owing entirely to the blessing of God: and yet this acknowledgement, if it hath any meaning at all, plainly amounts to this, that every creature subsists by the same grace of the creator, and consequently by the same almighty power, which gave it being at first. Hence then it must follow, that if any creature attempts to live in any other way, he renounces his dependence, and the only way in which he can live.

And hence it must follow of course, that as it was absolutely free to the creator, whether he should make any creatures

tures at all, and as he was absolute master and proprietor of his own grace; so he had a perfect right to deal out his favours in what measure and degree he pleased; that is, to make what, and how many, kinds and orders of creatures he pleased; to assign each of them their proper stations, and the purposes they were to answer there; the term of their duration, and continuance in life and being, and the appropriated means (where he has been pleased to appoint any means) for supporting them during that period. I said, where he has been pleased to appoint any means; because, had he so pleased, he could easily have supported them by his almighty immediate power, without any created means, as he doth those happy spirits who have access to behold his glory. But where he has appointed means, if these are neglected, or if the creature takes it into his head to live some other way, as by means which the creator has not blessed for that purpose, it is evident, that in either case such creature must perish. Thus every creature carries in its most perfect existence so much of his original nothingness, that it must

must argue either the greatest stupidity or perverseness ever to lose sight of it.

As then it appears, that no creature is, or can possibly be, the proprietor of its own being; far less can it have any property in any thing else. That must rest in him of whom it must be acknowledged, that all things in heaven and earth are his. His, I say, by the best and most perfect right; for he created them all, and for his pleasure they are, and were created. He has allowed his creatures the use of such things as are fit for them, and that is all they need, or indeed are capable of enjoying. Whatever he puts into any one's hands, is either by way of loan, which he may resume when he pleases, or is a trust committed to them, for which they must give account. This indeed founds and secures what is called *property* among men, but cannot affect the right of the great proprietor.

Hence will appear, with great evidence, the silliness of those exceptions which have been raised against those exertions of this divine right we have recorded in the sacred history, which they in their great wisdom cannot reconcile to the rules of
property

property and justice established among men; as if it was not lawful for the great proprietor to do what he will with his own. And this will appear in a yet stronger light, when it is considered, that no creature either hath, or ever can acquire, any rights at all, or any demands upon his creator, unless by some promise or grant of grace he condescends to make himself debtor to them, and thus lays a proper foundation for their faith and hope. All that the most enlightened mere philosopher has to build on, is what is called *the course of nature*, i. e. the order the creator has established in his world; and a presumption, as false as it is groundless, that things will continue to go on as they have done for the long course of time that is past. But even allowing the truth of the presumption, there is nothing to be expected beyond a present life. Death puts an end to life; and that, for any thing he can know, makes an end of the man.

This puts me in mind of another necessary consequence of creation, and the distinction the creator has made among the several ranks and orders of his creatures, viz. That he has with such perfect

wisdom adjusted the constitution of every one of them to the station and way of living which he has allotted them, that while they are perfectly pleased with their present gratifications, they have no taste or relish for, nay they would be miserable if they were confined to the way in which greatly more perfect creatures live. We need but look around us to find instances on every side. Whatever improvements and advances toward perfection, in their own sphere, any of them are capable of making, (and some are capable of vastly great ones); or, on the contrary, into whatever baseness, through negligence, sloth, and contracted habits, any of them may sink below their own species; yet can none of them ever transform themselves into another species, or get over the bounds which the creator has set for keeping up the distinction. Thus a plant, with all the improvements that can be made, can never become an animal, nor a brute animal be improved into a man; and, I believe, no man was ever so extravagant as to imagine, that he could transform himself into an angel. The rant of some enthusiastic philosophers, that there needed no more

to

to make them angels, but divesting them of these bodies in which they supposed themselves imprisoned, was either mere raving, or owing to a topic which no philosopher, as such, has any right to meddle with. Reason and revelation are very different.

But however limited every creature must be to its appointed station, and way of living, it would be immensely absurd to imagine, that the creator himself is so limited, that he may not, if he pleases, take any species of creatures, even the lowest and most worthless, or any individuals of the same species, and raise them to what degree of perfection and dignity he pleases, and that without the least shadow of injustice either to any other species, or to any individuals of the same species, left in their creation-state, or in that which they have chosen for themselves. To clamour or complain on such an occasion, could not be more foolish, than it would have been, in the first creation, for beasts to complain that they were not made men, or men that they were not made angels. Shall the creature say

to the creator, Why hast thou made me thus? And surely as little reason could any have to say in such a case, Why dost thou not promote me to some higher station? unless it had, what no creature ever had, or will have, some good reason to assign why he should do so,

C H A P. III.

Man's Original State and Circumstances.

HOWever useful and instructive the contemplation of the material universe may be, and that stupendous power which brought all things there into being, and established them in that beautiful order, which will always be more and more admired, the better it comes to be known and understood; yet it is in the creator's ways with man that our more peculiar concerns lie. The heavens do indeed declare the glory of God, and the skies preach his handy-work; all his creatures praise him, and proclaim the stupendous wisdom and power of their great creator; and, did we understand them well, we
would

would find as strong documents of his perfect goodness, an object worthy not only of all honour and adoration, but of the warmest gratitude and love: but in the unhappy circumstances wherein all the children of Adam are found, the terrors of his majesty rather damp and discourage, and thus mar, or rather destroy, the sentiments we ought to entertain. His ways with man present him in a nearer and more interesting light, and afford us the means of a fuller and more perfect knowledge of his true character. The record he has made of these ways completes a system of perfect knowledge and wisdom, which we never could have had by any other means whatsoever.

After the most circumstantial account of the creation of the heavens and the earth, we meet with a full account of the creation of man, and the circumstances in which he was then placed. And when we consider the order in which that great work of creation was carried on; from the less to the more noble creatures; from dead matter to plants and trees, fishes, fowls, and terrestrial animals; and how none of them were brought into being until

until provision was in all respects made for their comfortable subsistence; it gives at once a high notion of the creator's wisdom and goodness, and of the excellency of man, the last, and therefore the finishing piece of the creation; which is justly increased by the peculiar solemnity with which it is introduced. "And God," the *Elohim*, "said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness."

Great pains have been taken to explain away the natural and obvious sense which every candid reader must have affixed to these words, viz. That there were at least more than one concerned in the creation of man. For to whomsoever these words are supposed to be addressed, they must be supposed likewise to be creators, and consequently divine agents, being thus included in that work which most effectually distinguishes God from the creature; and if that is communicated to creatures, there is nothing left to distinguish him from them, as there is no perfection or power that can be imagined superior to what is displayed there. To say nothing of the palpable absurdity in supposing a creature possessed of, and exerting, the same

same power which brought it into being, to speak a world out of nothing, or even to make a man out of the dust of the earth. This is the peculiar work of those *Elohim*, who are JEHOVAH, the only proprietor of being; and who, we are well assured, will not give his glory to another, not even to the most dignified of the creatures he hath made.

It has been found a matter of some difficulty to adjust the proper import of these words, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." It would be a piece of very superfluous nicety to go about making a distinction between *image* and *likeness*. The words import no more than such an image as should bear some likeness to the original; and nothing can deserve the name of an *image* but what does so. But besides the likeness, the image must be a *designed* representation: A prodigious honour this, and such as we find no other creature dignified with. But the difficulty lies in finding wherein this similitude and likeness consist.

It has been reckoned absurd by the generality of inquirers, to look for this in the human body; and would certainly be so, if

if one was to look no further. They have therefore pitched upon the soul, which, by reason of its spiritual nature, may be thought to bear a nearer resemblance. And what the Apostle says of those who believe in Christ, viz. that they are “renewed after the image of him that created them, in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness,” hath determined them to look for it in those which are called the moral perfections of the soul. The Apostle’s description of the state of those who are renewed in Christ, is certainly a very just one; but it supposes they were men before they were thus renewed: and we find God himself declaring, that man was made in his image when the corruption was as great as now.

They seem to come nearer the truth, who, along with the moral, take in what they call the natural perfections and powers of the mind, which all together are supposed to constitute man a rational being. But, after all, we are told that this same image was made out of the dust of the earth, and to finish it, had the breath of life breathed into it. It must therefore be the man, and not any part of him separately

parately taken, who is this image; the soul and body united, and constituting one agent, endued with certain active powers which cannot be exerted but in this conjunction. The most refined and purely spiritual-like actions, are performed, not only in the body, but by the assistance of the corporeal organs; as appears very evidently in numberless obvious cases, where the mind is disabled in its most noble powers by the indisposition of these organs, and their incapacity of performing their part.

It may merit consideration, whether this compounded agent, in whom we find three distinct kinds of powers, and very like three distinct systems; united in so close a manner that they never act separately, viz. the *perceptive*, by which all our knowledge enters; by which I mean, not only the marvellous apparatus of the bodily senses, but those more wonderful organs by which we are fitted for taking in the information of such things as never fell within the reach of our senses; the *rational*, by which we are capable of improving the perceptions and informations we receive, to form our sentiments

This tractation of the word Elixir or a phreality in the God head by: comparison with the creation of Man.

and affections into a course of wisdom and virtue; and the *executive*, by which we exert such power as we have for accomplishing our purposes and intentions: it merits consideration, I say, whether this compound agent is not the fairest image and best representation of the perfect knowledge, wisdom, and power, of him that made him, and even of the union of three distinct agents in the one essence of JEHOVAH.

These however, we are sure, make out another further plan, on which the descriptive language is formed, by which the invisible God represents himself and his ways to man, viz. his perfect knowledge and understanding, by our organs of perception, eyes, ears, &c.; his perfect wisdom, by our scantling of wisdom, and even by our sentiments, affections, and passions; and his almighty power, by arms, hands, and even such instruments as we commonly use, or were in use at the time when these things were spoken and written. And had he not condescended to do so, we could never have understood his meaning. These therefore are no metaphors, but images,
or

or models, which enable us, by a course of analogy quite natural to us, to form such conceptions of what is infinitely above us as our present imperfection will admit of. I said, by a course of analogy quite natural to us: for a very child, when it hears of any thing it has not seen, will ask first, What it is? But when that cannot be satisfyingly answered, the next question is, What it is like? or what doth it resemble? And hence we see what attention is necessary, so to adjust the resemblance, as that we may not be misled to imagine, that the original is like the model, and that God is such an one as ourselves.

I have taken no notice of those, who, for answering certain purposes, place the image and likeness of God in the dominion that was given man over the other creatures within his reach. For, besides that this was a superadded gift after man was made, this could not be an image or likeness of God, but of his sovereign dominion over all things. And yet even from this, and, which is more, from the kingdoms and great empires of the world, and their measures of government, we find images

taken to express the sovereign dominion of God, and the righteous measures of his government.

There is something in the mechanism of the human body so very curious, even in the partial view we can take of it, (and it would be much more so could we discover the secret springs by which the whole is managed), that should raise in us the most affecting sentiments: for indeed we are "fearfully and wonderfully made." But yet there is something in the human constitution, namely, the soul of man, which, however infinitely short of its maker, is in a manner as incomprehensible, and of which we know nothing, but by the same means which lead us to the knowledge of him, viz. its actions and operations. Of these indeed we are inwardly and immediately conscious, while, at the same time, we know nothing of the being or agent which produces them. Many fruitless attempts have been made to bring this impenetrable secret to light, and to fix the boundaries between matter and spirit: but all the guesses and refinements that have been made, leave us just where every plain man would have found himself without

without them; and terminate in this simple conclusion, That the first is dead, inert, and purely passive; the other, lively and active: A distinction which answers all our purposes with as much precision, and without any of the inconceivable perplexities, that philosophical disquisitions are intangled with; and there every plain Christian may safely rest.

This active power is the same principle which constitutes what we call *life*; which, we observed before, is as great a mystery as creation itself, and resolves into the same energy of divine power. The different degrees distinguish the different kinds of it, as it is found in the different orders of living creatures which fall under our observation: and how many more there may be in the universe, who can take upon him to say? It would be a fruitless attempt to state the precise difference: but it is so great, that were any of these creatures to pass from one order to another, its former life must be superseded and put an end to, the same which we call *dying*. Men are apt to imagine, that advancing from a lower to a higher kind of life and activity, is only an improvement on the life which they had before.

fore. And it may be so, where there is no inconsistency between the old and new way of living. But the difference would be very sensible in a degradation, such as a man being turned into a brute, or an animal into a tree or a stone; though there is nothing more real in the one change than in the other. We have a familiar instance in those sorts of worms which are produced by flies: A common thing, but very instructive, if well improved.

To arrive at just apprehensions of our first father's paradisiacal life, we must consider with some attention every circumstance we find recorded about it. After his body was formed, God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the effect of it was, that he became a living soul, or, more literally, a soul of lives. But it must be remembered, that the word which is here rendered *soul*, is always used to signify the body, and often the dead body, of a man, both by Moses and the other writers in that language. But however the terms may lead us no further than that he was made a perfect animal, yet we are sure, that there was a spirit given him of a higher nature, and which

which has been thought, justly enough, to be implied in the plural form of the word which we render *life*. The breathing into him, I need not observe, gave rise to what has been called *inspiration*, expressing that inconceivable action of the eternal Spirit by which understanding and every spiritual gift is conveyed to man.

This same inspiration, though not confined to him alone, must notwithstanding be allowed a singular favour. An utter stranger in the new world, without knowing how either he or it came there; experience or observation might to him have been a sure, but evidently a very slow way of acquiring even the most necessary knowledge. His creator therefore condescended to be his teacher, and taught him in the only way in which a creature so situated could be taught. He gathered into the compass of one garden every creature he needed to know any thing about; and by putting him upon giving them names, taught him the use of those words and that language in which he afterward conversed with him in a friendly and familiar manner; an invention so much above human skill, that it is not at all likely
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it would ever have been carried much beyond the exclamations which naturally arise on the sensations of pleasure and pain, and such affections and passions as we find very closely connected with them.

What particular instructions he then gave him, we are not directly told; but by the particular circumstances which we have recorded, he was sufficiently taught, that he who thus conversed with him had created all these things, and him among the rest, and that creature-dependency which so naturally arises from that relation. Thus we find him acting, not so much as the man's superior, his lord and master, but as the sovereign proprietor of all: so that the man could not have any right or title to any thing, not so much as his necessary food, but by virtue of a grant from his creator; which we find he very formally made; but with a reservation, which should be a continual memorial to his creature, how he came by it, and of whom he held it. The dominion he gave him over the rest of the creatures carried the same import. But the finishing evidence of all was, the creation of the woman, which yet, no doubt for wise reasons,

** The prohibition of eating of the fruit of a certain tree*

reasons, he was not permitted to be witness to. And thus we may say of him in every view, what the Apostle Paul says of himself, "that it was by the grace of God he was what he was."

By the formation of Eve, and the blessing which followed upon it, we have brought into our view a power, which might be deemed rather greater than creation itself, if any thing could be so. That was effected indeed by a bare word: He spoke, and it was done by his immediate power. But here, by the word of the blessing, there was power established in the creature to convey being and life to a numberless succession of men. They were indeed but means and under-agents, through whom the divine power was to be exerted to such a vast distance of time. Thus every man is as really, though not so immediately, the production of divine power, as the first man was.

By this blessing, Adam was set at the head of mankind; and all the life that ever was to be communicated to any of mankind, was so lodged in his hand, that it could not be conveyed but through him; and of this one blood all the fami-

lies of the earth were to be created. And as no life of any kind can ever rise higher than its original creature-state, unless by a new interposition of creating power, which, I observed, the creator might exert when and upon whom he pleased; it follows, that when this power is exerted, then, in the strictest propriety of speech, and without any shadow of a metaphor, a new creature is produced into being. Adam's paradisiacal state has been regarded as the perfection of the human nature, and the fall regretted as an irreparable loss to mankind. It was certainly the highest any child of Adam can aspire to, when his ambition is indulged as far as it can carry his wishes. Adam indeed had every thing that could make such a creature happy; all that the earth could afford agreeable, laid to his hand; perfect innocence unalloyed by any thing that could mar his inward peace; and the friendship of his maker every day ascertained by fresh instances.

But with all the advantages he enjoyed, many and great as they were; yet, were it possible for any of his posterity to be restored to the same situation, he would find himself greatly short of that perfect happiness which he expected to find there;

as will appear very plainly from the circumstances in which Adam was placed. I mention only some of the most obvious, which yet will fully satisfy us, that his condition was not such as a wise man who knows any thing of Jesus Christ would wish to be found in.

What I chuse first to take notice of, is the highest part of his happiness, the communion and intercourses of friendship with his creator, which were all managed in a sensible manner; I mean, as men converse with one another. This some may reckon a singular advantage, and a very high privilege, much to be wished for in our present state of distance from God. But we must find ourselves obliged to think otherwise, when we reflect, that he neither had, nor could have, in that way, any views of the glory of God, but such as were veiled and darkened by sensible appearances, infinitely short of what the Apostle calls *seeing face to face*, and *knowing him even as we are known*, and even of that which now shines in the face of Jesus Christ, which every Christian has free access to. He was made for living in the state he was placed in,

and for possessing all the happiness a man can enjoy in a present world. But it does not appear he was made for any higher station, or more perfect way of living; and we have no intimation of any reason he had to hope for it.

It has been, I know not how, in a manner taken for granted, that after continuing for some time under probation, (how long, none have pretended to say, but some time or other), he should have been transplanted into a state much like that, if not the very same, which believers in Christ have the well-founded prospect of. We may surely say, that all this is mere guessing, as there is not the least shadow of any promise or grant of life, much less of such a life, found in the record. He needed no grant of the life he was in possession of. But even that he had no promise of being continued to him, except what was implied in the terms on which he held it. But in the denunciation solemnly made to him, That in the day he should eat of the fruit he should be subjected to death, there seems to be a plain enough intimation, that his present happiness was not to be perpetual ;

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as we are sure, by the event, it was never designed it should be.

The very possibility of this, and the danger he must have found himself in, of such (as must have appeared to him) an irreparable loss, at the same time that it should have put him strongly upon his guard, must have been a great drawback upon his present enjoyments, however great they may be supposed to have been. The prospect was dreadful. His creator gave him no security against it, as he could easily have done, but left it altogether in his own hand; and he could never be without some degree of fear, that either he, or some of his, might incur the awful forfeiture.

This danger was greatly increased by the natural imperfection of his constitution. With all the advantages he enjoyed, he was so closely connected with the creature, and in such dependence on material objects, both for the supports and enjoyments of life, that they stood as it were between God and him, and every thing almost he had from him came by them. This could have been no loss to him so long as these were kept in their proper place,

place, as the creatures of God, and absolutely in his hand: for thus they led him directly to the creator, and should have terminated all his acknowledgements there. But still there was danger, and the event shewed it to have been very great, that they might intercept that regard and attention which was due only to him, whose blessing alone, that is, his power put forth by them, could make them good for any thing.

But nothing can more convincingly illustrate the imperfection and weakness of that state, than the event and issue of it. We cannot say precisely how soon, but very soon an end was put to all the perfection and happiness the man was put in possession of at his creation, and the paradisiacal state together: A sure evidence, that the creator never designed it to be the permanent state of mankind, but an introduction to that which he had determined to be so, and which has taken place ever since our first father was driven out of paradise. But we have a stronger one. We are sure there was another sort of life, and another way too of living upon God, designed in his eternal counsels. Jesus
Christ

Christ was set up from everlasting as the only mediator between God and man, through whom alone all his favours are conveyed to them, and another sort of station was designed in the eternal world, as much more excellent than paradise, as heaven is above the earth, and God better than the creature; whereof the paradisaical state was only a faint shadow.

This leads us to one good reason for introducing what has been ever since the state of mankind in that manner. Hereby we are provided in something of a model or shadowy representation of the happiness of the unseen, spritual, and eternal world, and the way of living there, so different from what we are accustomed to in this our low state, viz. living on the fulness and all-sufficiency of him who furnished out all the beauty and excellency of paradise, the height of all earthly happiness. And thence we find the descriptive language taken, by which that glorious and happy state is painted out to us, and upon which, with proper allowances for the immense odds between the earthly and heavenly paradise, we are directed to form our conceptions and apprehensions of

of that otherwise inconceivable happiness and glory.

There was likewise another great and gracious end answered by this way of introducing the present state of mankind; a piece of instruction very necessary, but which we are very loath to receive; viz. That life can never be safely lodged in the hands of the most perfect mere man. A more advantageous situation can hardly be imagined than Adam was placed in. He had all the gratifications and materials of pleasure the world could afford, greatly above what the most finished epicure could ever have imagined, and was blessed at the same time with a perfect friend, and the most exalted friendship. His constitution so good, and his conscience so clear by his perfect innocence, that nothing could mar the most perfect enjoyment of all. He was made for his station, and his station for him, upon the measures of perfect wisdom. It was not by doing some great or difficult thing that he held his possessions, or indeed by doing any thing at all. He had no such law given him, as was afterward, when sin had entered; no duties, either of religion or morality enjoined

ed him. He needed none, for he was a law to himself. He needed only follow the dictates and inclinations of his own perfect constitution, which would naturally determine him to all those offices of love to his great friend and benefactor, which would of course have brought all other duties along with it. All that was required of him was a very small piece of forbearance, not to eat of the fruit of a certain tree which was pointed out to him. So that one might have thought he was set beyond the reach of every temptation. And sure easier terms could not be devised in his circumstances. But the temptation was admitted. He forfeited life by his transgression: and how foolish must it be in any of his posterity to imagine that life would be safer in their hands?

But the Apostle gives us yet a further and higher view of the creator's wisdom in this way of entering mankind into their present state. The first Adam was the figure, type, or representation of him who was to come, in whom all the hopes and all the happiness of mankind are centered, in whom all the counsels of God

were laid, and by whom they are performed and carried into execution, even Jesus Christ, the designed head of mankind, in relation to the spiritual and eternal world, as the first Adam was in relation to this: and there is hardly any one among the many types and figures we have given us of him more instructive, and which gives a more perfect view of him, as we find the Apostle improving it in his epistles to the Romans and Corinthians; which I will have occasion to consider more particularly when I come to speak of this glorious person. I only observe at present, that the first Adam stood at the head of mankind in the first creation, and represented all his posterity; that he received life both for himself and them from the creator's hand; that he was constituted the only channel of conveyance by which they could come to the possession of life, or any of the powers belonging to it; that accordingly he received the terms directly from his maker's hand on which it was to be held; and in the issue he failed in the performance, and thereby subjected himself and all his posterity to inevitable death, which
he

he transmitted to them along with that life which he conveyed.

C H A P. IV.

The nature of the Curse, and the condition of man by the Fall, stated.

THIS remarkable event, which I do not think deserves the epithet of an unhappy one, for such of mankind as improve it, has occasioned a great variety of curious speculations, and plans of the divine government, for justifying the creator's proceedings in the measures which he has taken for mankind, which I apprehend the plain Christian needs give himself very little trouble about, as all of them, more or less directly, are founded upon a proposition (to which I will not give the name that I think it deserves), viz. That so soon as the noble rational creature was brought into being, God put off the character of creator, and assumed that of a righteous moral governor, by which he bound himself to proceed with him in the precise terms of

rectoral justice; that is, by such measures as the kings of this earth are bound to observe toward their subjects, who are possessed of rights and property as well as the sovereign, and which he has no right to meddle with; but, on the contrary, stands bound by his place to be the guardian of. And thus the sovereign proprietor of all things in heaven and earth must be degraded into the rank of an earthly king, and that not an absolute, but a limited monarch, to favour the insolent pretensions of a set of precarious beings, who have neither right nor property, not so much as in their own life and being, but what he is pleased in mere sovereign grace to confer. And yet could a king be found among men perfectly wise, good, and powerful, it would unquestionably be the interest of his subjects to have him vested with the most absolute and uncontrollable powers.

The different plans which the assertors of this form of divine government have laid down for the measure of the divine procedure, will be found to terminate much in the same issue. Many have thought, that they might be best accounted

ed for on the plan of a covenant or covenants, as occasion required, concerted on certain terms and conditions to be performed by either party. The basis of the whole they make that which they suppose to have been made with the first man on condition of perfect obedience, and all after measures founded in and directed by it. Others reckoning this sort of condescension below the majesty of the sovereign, will have him to manage all as a righteous lawgiver, who prescribes rules of duty to his subjects, and is to reward or punish them as they observe or neglect his commandments; and thus reduce Christianity to a mere system of laws, and suspend the eternal state of mankind upon their good or bad behaviour, who must expect to be rewarded or punished according to the measures of justice, with such mixtures of mercy, or abatements of justice, as the case of the subject shall need.

The dangerous tendency of this last-mentioned scheme, the promoters of the covenant-plan greatly avail themselves of. But the most plausible ground, and what they found mainly upon, is, the word in the Old-Testament language, by which
God

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God hath chosen to express his instrument of government, and which our translators always render *covenant*. The word signifies generally all kinds of deeds, whereby rights of any sort are conferred, and is very frequently used for covenants or mutual agreements between man and man. This might have been reckoned decisive, if the New-Testament writers had not cleared up the difference. Where the Hebrews had but one word for all kind of deeds, the Greeks have two, *συνθεσις*, and *δωρεαν*. The first, as the word plainly imports, is used to signify covenants or mutual agreements, wherein two or more are engaged; the other is never used but to denote the deed of one, a constitution or established order, a grant, or deed of gift; and particularly a *testament*, by which inheritances or legacies are conveyed. And whoever will with any care and attention consider what in our translation are called *God's covenants*, will find them all of this latter kind, either authoritative constitutions, which those to whom they were given were obliged to submit to, or grants and deeds of gift in their favour, which went always together, and constituted at

once

once the rule of judgement for the sovereign, and of duty for the subject.

I observed before, that Adam, in his primitive state, had no grant of life; but he was put in possession of it, and had by special grant dominion given him over all God's other creatures within his reach: and upon this was founded the commandment, and the punishment in case of transgression. This was the sole constitution, and enough for that short period; and we see by the sequel how it was the rule on which judgement proceeded.

And here it may be proper to observe, once for all, that the laws of God, or such constitutions of any kind as he has seen fit to establish, are not like those of weak fallible men, who cannot foresee the different events and cases that may fall out, and therefore need often to be mitigated, dispensed with, and even abrogated, as the unforeseen alteration of circumstances may require. All his orders are concerted on perfect wisdom and foreknowledge of all events that can possibly happen; and therefore can never be dispensed with in any case, but must be fulfilled in every point: and where the
meaning

meaning is clearly expressed, he must be a bold man who dare venture to explain it into a consistency with any plan, however plausible, he may have laid down.

In order therefore to attain any thing like proper conceptions of the great change which was made in the circumstances of mankind by our first father's transgression, we must, in the first place, be sure of the right import and meaning of that denunciation which produced it, and particularly of that death which he certainly must fall under upon his eating the forbidden fruit. Many have carried this so far, as to extend it even to that which has been since called *eternal death*, the punishment we find denounced against the despisers or neglecters of Jesus Christ and his great salvation; therefore called *eternal*, because there remains no possibility of relief. Others stop as much short, confining it entirely to the death of the body, and reducing it to dust. There are only two ways on which we can certainly determine this important question, viz. the judgement given upon the delinquents by the judge, who was the framer of the law, and therefore understood it perfectly; and
our

our own experience of what we either do, or may feel, in ourselves, in this our present state, which was fixed and determined by that judgement. There has been a third way attempted, and much insisted on; namely, reasoning upon the circumstances of the case, and the consequences which seem naturally to arise out of them. So far as these are found agreeable to, and supported by the other two, we may conclude them just; otherwise no great dependence can be had on them, however they may appear to our apprehensions of things, which are at best but a bad rule to judge by.

As death is allowed by all to import an end put to life, and as the denunciation was peremptory, "In the day thou eatest thou shalt surely die;" *thou*, and not another, we must conclude, that it could import no less than the loss of all that life he was then in possession of, which we may call the paradisiacal life, and no further. It seems therefore incumbent on those who extend it to eternal death, to make it appear, that Adam in paradise was possessed of that kind of life which is called *eternal*, the life which is in Christ

*On the perfection of
Life by Adam*

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Jesus; which I believe no body will say. They build much on the nature and demerit of sin: and I would not willingly say any thing that might be constructed into the least tendency toward extenuating the nature of that horrible evil; but by the issue of this first dispensation, and several other instances in the record, we must conclude, that it belongs to the great sovereign to affix what penalty he pleases to his laws. The conclusions drawn from the nature of vindictive justice, are rather too bold for man to make, without better authority than the record gives us. But there is one insuperable prejudice that attends this supposition, That had eternal death been the penalty, Adam himself at least must have died eternally; and if the denunciation given upon the transgression extends to all his posterity, as appears by the event it did, not one of them could have been saved, without dispensing with the unalterable divine constitution, or some how changing the tenor of it: An absurdity which can never be admitted on any consideration whatsoever. That original life must be destroyed; nor can the original law be satisfied by any means
whatsoever

whatsoever until that is done: but when it is done, and that law thereby fulfilled, there is nothing to hinder the creator to raise whom he pleases to eternal life.

There is no room for disputing what is called the natural death: but it appears by the judgement given upon the transgressors, that the denunciation is not to be understood in that precise sense which our translation gives to it, "That in the day they should eat they should surely die;" neither do the original words necessarily infer that construction. Literally rendered, they run thus: "In dying thou shalt die." It is enough to support the truth of the denunciation, that from that day they should be brought under the power of death, which the painful labour they were condemned to very naturally issues in. But even in the sense our translation gives, the threatening may be found punctually fulfilled: For in that very day there was a final end put to man's paradisiacal life; he was driven out from that happy dwelling; and the pittance of life that was left him was supported in such a manner, and by such different means, that the degradation, e-

*The Paradisiacal
life only forfeited
not the eternal life*

*This is a supposition, & a supposition
that from that day they would become
dying creatures and so die ultimately die.*

ven in that view, must have been more than a metaphorical death, when compared with the life which he formerly enjoyed.

This was indeed a very sensible and affecting loss which our first parents sustained by their transgression, but not the only death which they fell under on that day. When we reflect on the nature of the crime, and the temptation which induced them to commit it, as bad as the neglect of their creator's authority was, there will appear something in it greatly worse. Their forbearance of that fruit was made the condition on which they held their lives. But it was made so for a higher end than a bare trial of their loyalty to their sovereign: It was designed to maintain a dutiful sense of their dependence on their creator, and that it was purely by his grace and supporting power that they could live. The crime could not be committed, as indeed no sin can, but upon a latent persuasion, that there is more to be made by the creature than they had to expect from the creator. On this the temptation was founded, "Ye shall be as gods, to know good and evil;" and thus
 should

should not need any longer to be obliged to him; and that he knew this very well, and had forbidden it merely to keep them in dependence. Thus they were drawn to forsake the only way in which they could live, and to take up with another, whereby it was impossible they could. And having thus deserted, and being thereby cut off from the fountain of life, they must have perished infallibly, if there had not been a new way opened for their relief.

This directs us into a further, and yet more dreadful, though not so sensible, view of that death the first offenders were subjected to, as they were certainly possessed of a greatly higher kind of life than that of a mere animal. Man was made indeed to take in all the pleasure the whole creation could give in its highest bloom of perfection: but he was made also for gratifications infinitely preferable, in the intercourses of friendship which subsisted between his creator and him. We need no more to prove a peculiar kind of life suited to this happy situation, than that he had a spirit in his constitution, as well as a body. And created spirits

God's communication of Death against Adam was carried fully into effect. Adam's body as well as his spirit, both died the manner of death peculiar to their nature. The body by its connection with the material system being broken off, the soul by its connection with God (the spiritual life) being broken off. All his posterity are to this day subject to this communication. But this denunciation did not imply an eternal death, so as to deprive God as

upright Lawgiver from raising any he pleases to eternal life after the punishment denounced had been executed.

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rits can no more subsist without the continued influences of the divine Spirit, than animals can do without air, and the influences of the sun exerted and directed by it. It is by this Spirit that the divine power, which upholds all things, the material world by means, and the spiritual directly and immediately, is exerted and put forth. When this Spirit is taken away, the communication between God and the creature is so far broken off, that the man can no longer live as spirits do; it is the very death of the spirit, and what effectually puts an end to the spiritual life. But it will not follow, that the spirit must perish, or be reduced to its primitive nothing. Annihilation and death are two very different things. When the soul leaves the body, and its connection with the material system is broken off, the man is dead, though the body continues just as it was before; and even when it is dissolved into dust, there is not one atom annihilated. Must it not be then reckoned sufficient to denominate a spirit dead, when its connection with the spiritual system is so far broken off, that it can no longer live as spirits do, but is degraded

here and undergo its punishment. The soul by its natural separation from God, and the body by its returning to its original dust. &

*Adam never professed that eternal life this same
is in Jesus Christ and was of all eternity in the
purposers of God, lodged in his Son's hands. Adam's*

Man's condition by the FALL. 79

and sunk into a mere implement for exalting the animal life in man, above the same kind of life in his fellow-brutes, a mere slave and purveyor for the appetites and lusts of his sensual part.

It were much for the interest of men, in this world, as well as in the next, that this was not so completely verified as it is by the experience of mankind, and by what is to be found in every child of Adam. We have it strongly attested in the divine record, where we have them all declared naturally to be such thorough atheists, or so without God in the world, that they neither receive, nor can so much as know the things of God, for want of that spiritual discerning, which is the first and most natural exertion of spiritual life, and on which all the other actings of that kind of life are founded. But though we had no such testimony, we needed not go so far back as the way by which we come into the world, and the total ignorance which infancy and the first period of life are involved in, to be fully convinced of this sad truth, That all men are born atheists; and that the far greatest part, after all the pains and instruction they will admit of, are but very very little better. We need only

Spiritual life consisted in his communion with God. Christ, the spiritual Adam, spiritual life consists in the very prospect of God himself who is eternal life.

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*The natural affections of man
discern the things of God*

only look in to ourselves, and make a serious effort to rouse our spiritual powers, and try fairly what we can make of God, and of all the wonders of the unseen spiritual world; and the least we can conclude must be, that we are in a state of absolute banishment from it, and cut off from all correspondence with it; made for nothing but a present world, and incapable of living upon any thing but the things of a present world; and the only use we put our souls to is, to make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof.

It cannot be thought, however, that the first delinquents, who had been taught and had seen so much of God, could ever sink into a state of such brutal ignorance; especially when, with all the disadvantages our rational and perceptive powers are loaded with, we retain still a very marvellous power, or what would be reckoned such, was it not so common, that we can take in informations of such things as we never saw, and make our advantage of them much in the same manner as if we had seen them ourselves. By virtue of this wonderful talent, the experimental knowledge our first parents had acquired might be, as we know by the record it certainly

certainly was, handed down to their posterity: and even to this day we know what great measures of hearsay knowledge may be acquired, even of spiritual and eternal things, by the informations we have in our hands; and which ought to produce the same effect in us which their experimental knowledge did in them.

Their behaviour is very instructive; and though very shortly, yet is very naturally described. The first thing we have observed about them is, that the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. As nakedness is often used in the record to express the unhappy state of a soul forsaken of God, it might be reasonably enough constructed in this sense, were it not for the way they took for relief against the painful sense of it, which determines it to bodily nakedness. But that does not lead us to imagine, as some have done, that they were formerly in such a state of childish simplicity, that they could not distinguish between a naked and a cloathed body. The opening of their eyes argues no more, but that they were so shut during the working of the temptation, that they did

not mind what they were doing; until, upon a reflection on their guilt, fear and shame, its inseparable companions, seized them at once: unless we should think as some, not without good appearance of reason, have done, that during their innocence, and frequent converse with their maker, their whole bodies were cloathed with such a light as shone in the face of Moses when he came down from conversing with God on Sinai.

But however that is, their remorse appears to have been very strong. And it could not be otherwise, when they came to reflect on what they had lost, and how shamefully it was lost, for a trifle, a thing of nothing! and especially when what they had to expect was taken into the account. They durst not think of the creator; and the creature, which was now their only resource, could provide them no better than with a few leaves to cover their nakedness, and a thicket to hide them from the all-seeing eye of their creator: A sure sign, that with all the knowledge they had of the creator, their notions of him were not very sublime. And thus, as their only care appears to have been,

been, to keep out of God's sight, if he had not condescended to look after them, they had never ventured to seek after him.

We need not insist any further on the judgement given on this occasion, by which the state of mankind was fixed exactly as we now find it. The ground was cursed, that it should not yield its strength, even upon the most laborious tillage; in the sweat of their face they were to eat their bread; thorns and thistles sprung spontaneously out of the earth; and in the end man returns to the dust from which he was taken.

There is a peculiar unhappiness attends this station, where man has nothing left him to live upon but what he can pick up in a present world, and is shut out from all correspondence with his creator. Thence his sentiments come all to be formed upon the present state of things; and the rational powers, which should have balanced the heart with those things which are not seen, have lost their influence; and, upon the whole, such strong and inveterate habits are contracted, that perfect wisdom has declared it as impossible for him to learn to do well, as it is for the Ethiopian

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to change his skin, and the leopard his spots. The love of a present life, and a present world, is the ruling principle in the heart; and where that is the case, we are well instructed to say, the love of God can have no place; and the poor creature can do nothing, but, dead as he is to God, bring forth a continued course of dead works, as the apostle very emphatically and justly calls all that is done by man, until the Spirit of life in Christ recovers him into life, and plants the love of God in the heart.

Thus the man naturally goes on, with a mind so blinded by the god of this world, that even the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, shining round about him, can have no access there: the course of the world, and the example of those about him, harden him more and more, until the wrath of God, revealed from heaven, against all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men, gives the alarm. Guilt points it directly at him: and what should have driven him to his creator, where only relief can be had, viz. an evil conscience, or a consciousness of guilt, presents him in all the terrors of an enemy, and in-
flames

flames the heart to treat him as such. It first represents him as one who will not be pleased with the creature till he renounce all that is agreeable to his perverted taste; and then so pure, so holy, and so just, that it can never be imagined he will regard such a wretch as the poor sinner must find himself to be. Hence the heart comes to be filled with such fears, jealousies, and evil surmises, as foster a secret enmity, so strong, that it is the hardest thing in the world to reconcile a sinner's heart to God, and make him pleased with him as he is. This enmity indeed dare not vent itself directly, but vents itself sufficiently in secret wishes, that God were not so pure, so holy, and so irreconcilable to sin. It is this unhappy spirit that has produced so many attempts by those they call *learned men*, to reconcile the love of God and the love of the world; and to contrive such ideas, as they call them, of God, as may be reconciled to the lusts and passions of men; that is, such a god as they want, and could be pleased with.

This apparently unhappy condition, which mankind have been reduced to on occasion of their first father's transgression, has

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has opened the mouths of a certain set of men, who would be thought greatly wiser than their neighbours, to utter the most outrageous clamours against the justice and equity of this way of proceeding; which they magisterially pronounce so unworthy of God, that rather than believe it, they will chuse to believe that God has never spoken to mankind at all, but left them to live and die in this deplorable condition without any remedy. For that men actually are found in this condition cannot be disputed. It must therefore be found consistent with all the divine perfections, that man should be born into, and live in a present world as we see he does: and when that is the case, one would think it a matter of no great moment, how or in what manner he was brought into it. Had it pleased the creator to have entered man into this way of living, without having ever heard of any better state any man was ever in; nay, had he made them mere rational animals, to live and die as other animals do; who durst have said any thing against it? what ground then can any man have to complain, that he took a
method

method so instructive, and so full of goodness, as that was, to introduce it by ?

But after all, this is only a part, and the dark side too, of the state which mankind were brought into by the loss of the paradisiacal life. Mankind was not left a day in that melancholy situation in which our first parents found themselves upon their transgression. Their gracious creator fought them out, and, to their apprehension, brought them into judgement. But judgement was given in such terms as perfectly relieved their fears of present death. And though it greatly abated their earthly happiness, it opened a prospect infinitely more advantageous, in the promise of a seed by the woman, who was first in the transgression, which should bruise the serpent's head ; that is, as the Apostle John explains it, " should destroy the works of " the devil," sin and death. And as we certainly know, that he was the old serpent who deceived Eve in that form, in the curse, denounced as it is in emblematical terms adapted to the state of that noxious reptile, we have a very strong description of the baseness of his nature, his way of living, and the work he was condemned to.

CHAP.

C H A P. V.

Sketch of Dispensations from the Fall to the coming of Christ; with a general view of the character of Christ.

FROM the account we have of the manner in which man was driven out of paradise, it appears rather to have been a work of mercy than of judgement. The speech it is introduced with, "Behold, the man is become as one of us," has more the air of compassion, than of irony, as some have constructed it. And if the following words are justly rendered, it was an act of real kindness; that the man might not fall again into the like snare, and run into a new instance of rebellion, by attempting to eat of the tree of life, that he might evade the sentence appointing him, to return to the dust from which he was taken. For securing against such a pernicious event, a guard of angels was set, to keep him out.

But indeed the original words of Moses will, without any violence done them, admit

admit of a very different construction. It is well known, that the tree of life, from the beginning to the end of the record, is made use of to signify what the tree which bore that name in paradise was but a figure or emblem of, viz. the great means which God hath chosen to convey eternal life to dead sinners of mankind. It is observed by those skilled in the language, that the particle which we render *lest*, and which gives the turn to the whole sentence, may be as properly rendered, so as to put man in a possibility of recovering life, as was done by the intimation already made in the serpent's curse. And what follows, of setting up the cherubims on the east of the garden, seems, all things considered, to determine their intention to be, not to keep men from, but to guide them into, the way of the tree of life. This will appear more than probable, when we reflect on the purpose which the cherubims answered in the tabernacle and temple: They were appendages of the mercy-seat, and Jehovah inhabited them, or dwelt between them. It was, without all question, an emblematical exhibition of the God of grace dwelling among that people for whom Moses

wrote, who, for any thing appears, had no other notion of cherubim. And when they were told of God's having placed them on the east of Eden, they could not help concluding, that he pitched on that as the place in which he chose to manifest himself, and where the worshippers were to make their approaches to him: which is yet further confirmed by this, that we find the face, or faces, of Jehovah, mentioned as some place from whence Cain was, or at least was afraid of being driven out. What is added, of a flaming sword, in our translation, is only fire, and another word which signifies any weapon of slaughter; which may possibly be a short hint of the institution of sacrifice to be offered there. And I believe, upon the whole, it will be found very nearly to resemble the prophet Ezekiel's fire infolding itself, in his vision of the glory of God in the cherubim, rather than a flaming sword turning every way at one part of the garden, while all the rest was left open.

But however that is, it cannot be thought that they had no fuller information than the short hints we find in the record. The people for whom Moses wrote, needed no more;

more ; as they were very fully instructed in all the matters of acceptable worship in the law, by the statutes and judgements which were given them. We have not so much as any express mention of any appointment of that very extraordinary piece of worship, viz. the offering sacrifices, which yet could never have entered any other way, and carries its divine authority in its very appearance. For who could ever have imagined, that the shedding a beast's blood, and burning its flesh with fire, could be pleasing to the great sovereign and proprietor of heaven and earth? Yet we know it was practised by wise and good men in the earliest ages; who would never have affronted the God they worshipped with such an absurd sort of service, if they had not had his order, and seen further into the design of it, than the later philosophers did, who ridiculed, and made it their business to expose it. Abel sacrificed, and his sacrifice was accepted; so did Noah, Abraham, and others on record; and no doubt many more, who are not mentioned there. Nay, and we have good reason to carry it higher; as we find God himself making a covering for our first parents.

rents of the skins of beasts, which must have been killed, and could be killed for no other purpose than sacrifice, as the flesh of animals was no part of their food in that period.

We who know, that from the time we have any accounts of covenants and agreements among men, they entered into them by sacrifice, and how this was the way which God himself took when he entered into what is called a covenant with the Israelitish nation, are very naturally led to think, that the same measure was taken at the promulgation of the constitution of grace, and that grant of eternal life which was then made to mankind in the seed of the woman. That there was such a grant then intimated to them, can admit of no doubt; because it was the only tenor by which they could hold their lives, and the only foundation they had to build their faith and their hope on. There was no difficulty in understanding the import of a promise: but they must have needed a great deal of instruction to make them understand the nature and use of a sacrifice; which indeed it is hardly possible to make good sense of, but as it stood in connection with the promised

mised seed, the great and complete sacrifice which God had in his perfect wisdom designed for putting away sin, so as it should be remembered no more, and to give mankind the strongest assurances, not only of pardon, but of the fulfilment of every tittle contained in the grant, in the fullest and most perfect manner, which we shall find occasion to consider more particularly afterward. This was so essential, that we find the Apostle declaring positively, "that without shedding of blood there was no remission." And thence it is very likely, that the grant or covenant ratified by the sacrifice, and the sacrifice itself, came to be called by the same name; and the making of a covenant or deed in one's favour was expressed by cutting off a *BERITH*.

It was upon this seed then that the grant of eternal life, and all the promises subservient to it, were founded. We hear nothing further about it, but what is implied in what we are told of a time when men began to *call upon*, say our translators; but the original and context determine the sense, that they began to *be called by*, the name of JEHOVAH. For we
read

read there of a division among mankind; those who adhered to the instituted worship, and those who forsook it; the sons of God joining in marriage with the daughters of men; upon which such wickedness ensued, as occasioned the destruction of the whole human race, excepting only eight persons saved in the ark by special divine grace. Noah found grace in the eyes of JEHOVAH.

Noah was no sooner come out of the ark, than we find him building an altar, and offering sacrifices of every clean beast and fowl: A sure evidence that he had been accustomed to it before; and that even the distinction between clean and unclean beasts was known long before Moses, and even before the flood; a distinction which no man had authority to make among God's creatures. God, we are told, smelled a sweet savour, or a savour of rest: A phrase which we find often repeated in the law of Moses on such occasions. What shall we say of this? shall we believe that the smell of burnt flesh was so pleasant to the Most High? No, surely. But what was represented by it, and the faith of the worshipper in the promised seed, were so.

Accordingly

Accordingly he was blessed; the original blessing was renewed to him, and blood set apart to make an atonement for the lives of men.

In the covenant which God then declared he had made with all flesh, to secure them against such an universally destructive deluge, we have an instance, and a strong confirmation, of what I observed of what is called God's covenant; that it does by no means imply any agreement of parties, but is his own single deed, an authoritative constitution or grant which the creature is bound to believe and acquiesce in, which we find strongly and properly expressed by laying hold on his covenant, or entering into it, precisely as he has laid it. This same constitution we are directed to as a model of the covenant or constitution of grace, by the rainbow about the throne, represented in vision to the Apostle John in his Revelations.

It would seem, that by the time Abraham was called, the apostasy had again become very general. The promise of the seed, which had been until that time left at large, was renewed to him, and limited to his family, in a very remarkable manner.

manner. The blessing or promise of eternal life, and the promised seed, had always gone together from the beginning. Whenever the seed should come, it was taken for granted, that the blessing was to come along with him. But the time of his coming was at a great distance. To support therefore the faith of his people, and to give proof of his faithfulness, he condescended to give Abraham two intermediate grants; first, of a son; and, secondly, of the land of Canaan to his seed; both of them delayed so long, and himself and his wife first, and afterwards his seed, reduced to such circumstances, that nothing but almighty power could make them effectual. But by that power they were made effectual, and the faithfulness of God in making good his promises, so firmly established, that no doubt could be made of what was yet behind. And here again we have another palpable instance of God's covenant being a deed and constitution of his own, without any parties or mutual agreements.

The memory of this promised seed was kept up in the Israelitish nation, from the time especially that Moses wrote so particularly

larly of him, and the promise continued at large among them, until it was further limited to the family of David; by whom, and all the succeeding prophets, he was set forth in all the views he was designed to answer; sometimes in the character of a servant, in great affliction and distress; sometimes in all the authority of a great prophet, and the sacredness of a priest; but mostly in the majesty of a great king, such as never was in the earth, to whom all the nations of the earth should willingly submit themselves. In the wisdom of the great director, the spirit of prophecy was withdrawn for a long time before his appearance; and the poor creatures had got themselves so intoxicated with the hopes of an universal monarchy, that when he came, they despised his mean worldly appearance, and thus fulfilled the prophecies concerning him, and proved him to be the very seed in whom all the families of the earth should be blessed. Thus the record leads on our views of the seed from the beginning of the world, and never loses sight of him, until it lands us in the person of Jesus Christ, the only one, who, by his miraculous birth, pro-

perly merited that title. In him the whole record centers ; infomuch that we may say with assurance, that there is not one single fact there which does not one way or other tend to set him forth to our faith ; and therefore it justly merits the title the Apostle John gives it, " The record which God has made," or the testimony which he has given, *concerning his Son.*

The great Apostle Paul was so sensible of this, that when he came to declare the testimony of God to the Corinthians, " he determined to know nothing among them, but Jesus Christ, and him crucified ;" and accordingly counted all things but loss and dung, in comparison with that excellency there is in the knowledge of him. He gives it accordingly as the sum of Christianity, " to know him, " and the power of his resurrection, and " the fellowship of his sufferings ; being " made conformable unto him in his " death." We are apt to extol the happiness of the people who had access to a personal knowledge of Jesus. The Apostle Paul was of another mind. That was but knowing him after the flesh ; a thing he

valued

valued very little. We have all that we could have known of him by such personal acquaintance with the man Jesus, in the accounts that are left us of all that he began to do and to suffer, by four ear and eye witnesses, and greatly more by his death, resurrection, and the glory that followed; for his history has this singularity in it, that his life and death, which include the whole history of other men, make but a small part of his. We are led back before the beginning of this world, and forward, as much beyond the end of it, into that immense eternity which none but he who inhabits it can comprehend. And as we find the Apostle pitching particularly upon his cross, as what alone he chose to boast and glory in, it is there we shall find the most advantageous situation for taking a distinct view of him whom we are so much concerned to know; and thence to gather his true character on such certain facts as may be safely depended upon. And thence see what regards we owe him, and what we have to hope or to fear from him; that is, to form such sentiments of him as shall at once regulate and influence our conduct and behaviour to-

wards him, in such an easy and natural way as we are accustomed to in similar cases among men. For herein lies the excellency of the way that God has chosen to dispense his grace, that it is suited to the frame and constitution of the human nature with an exactness which none could reach but the creator, who understood it perfectly; which, by the way, is no contemptible evidence of its divine original.

I need say nothing of the death of the cross, which is so well known to have been the most infamous, shameful, and painful, that the utmost ingenuity of human cruelty could invent; a kind of death which none were subjected to but the very basest and vilest of mankind; and yet his previous barbarous and cruel mockings, watchings, and scourgings, greatly enhanced his sufferings; to all which we may add, another kind of sufferings, which was not subjected to human perception, viz. the weight and burden of the sins of the world, which he had taken upon himself, to put them away.

Such a death as this must very naturally put any man of common humanity to ask, what could be the crimes that deserved

ved to be expiated by such a horrible punishment? But how must he be surprised to find, that he had passed the whole of his life in such perfect innocence, as never another man did either before or after him; that from his birth to his death, he never either did or said a wrong thing; infomuch that his bitterest enemies, when challenged openly by him to convict him of any one sin, had nothing to answer; and even those who, in the strength of an ignorant mob, clamoured him to death, had nothing to charge him with, but his saying, (what their own Messiah must have said whenever he appeared among them), that he was the Son of God?

But how much more surprised must any man of common reflection be, when he comes to be informed, (as we are most certainly informed), that he was a man of the most tender compassion, and the greatest and most disinterested beneficence to mankind, which he never missed an opportunity of exerting; so that none who ever applied to him were sent away without their errand; and in many instances he offered his assistance, and gave relief, without being asked, or any how applied to

to for it; that he consecrated himself entirely to the noble business of doing good night and day, without any the least advantage to himself; that, after all, the very foxes, and birds of the air, were better provided in worldly accommodations?

But the wonder must rise above the highest astonishment, to find what almighty-like power he shewed forth on these occasions. He healed all manner of diseases and ailments of every kind; most of which were incurable by the most skilful physicians: he opened the ears of the deaf, gave eyes to such as were born blind, and limbs to the maimed: nay, he carried his power higher, and showed such an absolute command over all the powers of nature, that even the winds and seas, the most boisterous of all, obeyed his orders; and the devils themselves were so subject to his authority, that they durst not so much as enter into a few swine without his leave and permission.

The manner in which all these things were done by him was yet, if any thing could be so, more wonderful than the things themselves: They were almost all done without the intervention of any means,
but

but (as all things were first brought into being) by a bare word of command: and when at any time he made use of any thing like means, it was either a mere touch, or what in its nature seemed rather to threaten a contrary effect; and on three several persons he exerted a power which must be acknowledged peculiar to the creator, viz. raising the dead; one of whom had been so long buried, that his nearest relations concluded his body must be putrified.

But his benefactions were not confined merely, or even chiefly, to the bodies of men; his business lay especially in instructing them in the things which concerned the kingdom of God; and in this great work he was absolutely indefatigable. It is needless to mention particular instances; the gospels are full of them. And there was something so singular in his manner of teaching, that even his common hearers were astonished at it: "For he taught as one having authority, and not as the scribes," the learned expounders of the law. The very officers who were sent to apprehend him, could not help bearing witness, that never man spake like

like that man; and little wonder, when it comes to be known and considered who he really was:

Nicodemus's conclusion was evidently just, and the lowest that could be made from such facts as these, viz. "That he
" was a teacher sent from God." The reason he gave for it was convincingly good; for assuredly "none could do the
" works which he did, unless God was
" with him." This gives every thing he asserted the weight and authority of a divine oracle; and the Jews conclusion was no less evidently false, viz. That his testimony was not true, because "he testified of himself." Whereas indeed, tho' his testimony had been single, yet being supported by such miracles, it deserved all the regard that was due to a divine testimony: And accordingly we find him oftener than once appealing to the works which he did, as a sufficient evidence and testimony given for the truth of all his pretensions. But however that was abundantly sufficient, it was not the only way by which God testified concerning him. He testified by John, whom all acknowledged to be a prophet: and he testified yet more directly by a voice from heaven, "This is my be-
" loved

“ loved Son, in whom I am well pleased, “ hear him.” This gives the divine sanction to every word he spake, and verifies what he said of himself, “ He that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me:” and it must be the same in the case of rejecting him.

The great truth which himself says he came into the world to bear witness to, was a very comprehensive one; expressed shortly in this, That he was the very Christ, the Messiah, or anointed One, so long promised and prophesied of, whom the very people who opposed him professed to be looking and waiting for. But there was another truth implied in that, which they could by no means bear the thoughts of, viz. that the true Messiah was not at all such a person as they fondly expected. He was indeed to be a great king, infinitely greater than they could imagine: but his kingdom was not of this world; and therefore, either all purely spiritual, as it is during a present life in the hearts and spirits of men; or reserved for a future state, and to be entered upon by the resurrection of the body in the world to come. And thus we are led back to the

accounts we have given us of him by the Old-Testament writers, which I cannot stand here to give any particular account of; for this, in effect, would be to transcribe all that Moses, and the prophets, and psalms, have said of him, from the first mention of the seed of the woman, to what Malachi closes with, "The Lord suddenly coming to his temple."

It will be proper however to observe, that the leading character of the Messiah, in which all that is testified concerning him lies, is the seed of the woman bruising the serpent's head, and Abraham's seed, in whom all the families of the earth should be blessed: and if we know what blessing is, and it was explained to Abraham, we will need no more to lead us into proper conceptions of him; for thus we find the blessing stands, "I am thy portion, and exceeding great reward;" which comprehends infinitely more than any language can express; the very same that is so often called eternal life in the New Testament. He is set forth in a variety of characters for answering the various necessities of mankind. Moses speaks of him as so great a prophet, that whosoever did not hear

hear him should be absolutely destroyed, and that without remedy. David speaks of him as a priest of a very singular and extraordinary kind; constituted by the great sovereign of heaven and earth, a priest after the order of Melchizedek; and constituted with two very singular circumstances, that he was appointed a priest for ever; and appointed with the solemn oath of the unchangeable God, who never does, nor can repent, of any constitution he hath made.

The rest of the prophets generally represent him in two very different views; sometimes in the condition of a servant, in a low and mean estate, despised and rejected of men, and even brought down to death and the grave: but most frequently, in all the pompous glory of a mighty conqueror, and an universal monarch; and very often with such titles and royalties as can belong to none but the sovereign of the universe; nay, frequently as Jehovah himself, the God of Israel. We find Jesus speaking of himself precisely in the same manner; as, "sent of the Father;" "receiving a commandment from the Father, both what he should speak, and

“ what he should do;” that “ he did
“ nothing of himself;” “ did not seek
“ his own glory, nor did his own will;”
but was entirely devoted to the will of him
who sent him; and, upon the whole, de-
clares himself entirely resigned to his dis-
posal. At the same time he spoke of him-
self in such a manner, that the most learn-
ed among the Jews concluded that he made
himself God. This they inferred from his
always speaking of God as his father, and
himself as his son. And in common sense
their construction was right; especially
when we find him assuming to himself e-
very name, every title, and every work,
by which God is distinguished from the
creature; that he knew the secrets of e-
very heart, and needed no information a-
bout even those who were the greatest
strangers to him; that he took upon him
professedly to forgive sin; that he pro-
fessed to have life in himself, even as the
Father had; and that whatsoever the Fa-
ther did, he did also.

The Apostle John, in his entrance up-
on the history he has left us of him, solves
the mystery, and makes all plain and con-
sistent. He tells us there of a certain di-
vine

vine person, whom he calls by a name which our translators render *The Word*; who, he says, was in the beginning; which must mean, before any thing was created; that "he was with God, and "that he himself was God;" "that by "him all things were made;" and lest any should imagine that he himself was made, he adds, that "nothing that was "made," no created thing, "was made "without him." Another apostle carries it further: That all things were not only created by him, but for him; that by him all things consist, and that he upholdeth all things by the word of his power. This eternal Word he says was *made flesh*, or rather incarnate, and tabernacled among men; his glory was veiled; but not so much that it might not be discovered to be the glory of the only begotten of the Father; and such a fulness of grace and truth was in him, as could be no where lodged but in a divine person.

This leads us to the true construction of a title often given in the earliest ages to one who appeared in the form of a man, but at the same time discovered himself either by his words or actions to be Jehovah,

vah, the God of Abraham, and the Israelitish nation. Our translators render it always the *angel of the Lord*, the title commonly given to that order of creatures. These are simply called *angels*, but I doubt if this title is ever given to any but that one distinguished divine person. Literally rendered it is, *the angel*, that is, the messenger, he who is sent, or the *agent Jehovah*: A very significant description of that divine agent, whose province it is to deal immediately and directly with the creature, and particularly with man; the one mediator between God and man; the same who has been, not without good appearance of reason, thought designed by two titles we find often mentioned, *The Word*, and, *The Name of Jehovah*, often with such actions ascribed to him they belong to, as can be given to none but a divine person.

This point was strongly disputed between Jesus and his disciples on one side, and the Jewish rulers on the other. The last thought they had certainly gained their point when they had him crucified, buried, and a seal set upon his grave. But it came out quite otherwise. He had said before
his

his death, what no creature could say, "that he had power to lay down his life, "and power to take it up again;" and had accordingly foretold that he would do so; adding withal, that no man had power to take his life from him; and that certainly was what no mere man could say. But the event justified both, and confounded his opposers: for he was declared to be the Son of God with power by his resurrection from the dead; a fact which was so strongly attested by great numbers who saw and knew him, that the truth of it could not be disputed.

There was another thing he promised his disciples when he was going to leave them, infinitely above the highest created power, and which none but God, the most high God, could perform. When they were overwhelmed with grief on what he had said to them concerning his leaving them, he told them, that "he would send "them another comforter; the Spirit of "truth;" the very Spirit of God. He says indeed, "he would ask the Father, "and he would send him;" that was great; but we find him in plain terms taking it upon himself. And in what an astonishing

ing manner this was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost it is needless to say, as we have it so fully related: and there we have the strongest and most convincing evidence of the comfortable truth he asserted to his disciples, Matth. xxviii. 18. "That
" all power was given him in heaven and
" in earth;" and "that the Father had
" so loved him his Son, as to commit all
" things into his hand."

By this short sketch of our Lord's history, it will easily appear, that no exception can be taken against his proper and essential Deity from any thing he has said of his Father's being *greater* than him, or his acting in the character of his *servant*, directed and bound by his supreme authority, &c. It might be sufficient to say, that it was the man Jesus who spoke these things; but it is fully taken off by the character in which he acted, as mediator between God and man; by which office he was bound to execute all the counsels and purposes of grace, mercy, and love, to mankind; and in this character, as God and man united in one person, to rule and govern with all divine power and authority, during the present state of things, until
the

the kingdom being given up unto the Father, God shall be all in all, and there shall be no further occasion for such a distinction of divine characters, and no room left for that which gave the Son that subordination on which these expressions are founded.

C H A P. VI.

Christ's Life and Character further considered, as an Example.

I Have taken no notice of the birth of this extraordinary person, and the way in which he entered himself among Adam's children. And that was indeed every way as extraordinary, whether we consider the very mean and low circumstances wherein he appeared in the eye of the world, or the very grand ones in the eyes of all that were capable of observing them. The manner of his conception by the power of the Most High in the womb of a pure virgin, the heavenly powers celebrating his coming into the world, the wonderful star which intimated his birth

to the remotest East, which were overlooked by those who had the best reason to attend to them; all these concurred to attest his greatness in the lowest and most contemptible outward circumstances; though these last, at the same time, were every way as proper, as it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren the sons of Adam, in their lowest state of abasement, sin only excepted.

I need not observe, that it is from the terms in which the angels delivered the intimation of his birth to the shepherds, as "glad tidings of great joy," that the name was taken which denominated the publishing of these same tidings to the world, viz. the *gospel*, or good news concerning Jesus Christ; and they must have been such indeed to all who had heard of the seed in whom all the families of the earth should be blessed. But as we Gentiles were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, we could not have known how good the news were, until we were acquainted with his character, and how much the happiness of mankind depended on him. Hence the word has been extended

tended to take in the whole of what we are taught to believe concerning Christ, and the ends and purposes for which he came into the world. And thus the whole of that record which God has made concerning his Son, is called the *gospel of Christ*.

The angels song contains the substance of it; the uniting of two things, which, to all created wisdom, must have appeared absolutely incompatible: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, and good will towards men." The doubt which put even Solomon's faith to a stand, all things considered, was a very puzzling one, "Will God in very deed dwell with men upon earth?" and who could have resolved it in the affirmative, had it not been for the appearance of Jesus Christ? In his person God has condescended to unite himself to man in such a manner, as, even if we knew no more of him, must give ground to expect some very great advantage from this singular honour done our nature; the nearest approach the creator can make to the creature. But none durst have presumed to carry their expectations so high as our Lord did in his last prayer, where we find him improving it

to establish such an union between God and all who believe in him, as shall make them *one* in the Father and the Son. In this grand point all the counsels of God terminate; and there the human nature is exalted to the highest pitch of perfection and happiness, far above what the most sanguine advocates for the dignity of it could ever imagine.

The first step that can be taken toward this, must be what our Lord says is eternal life, viz. "to know the only true God." The best description that can be made of an invisible being must labour under many defects, and hardly make any impression on creatures of our make; unless it be illustrated and confirmed by sensible facts. His eternal power and Godhead are clearly seen from the creation of the world, being understood by the things that he hath made; but what we have either to hope or fear from him needs further illustration: and upon the whole, we need to have some image or model to form our apprehensions upon. The old image given us in man is so greatly defaced, that it is in danger of darkening instead of illustrating the divine perfections. In Jesus Christ we have a complete one. He is the image of the invisible

visible God, so complete, that whosoever has seen and known him, must also see and know the Father. It must be so; for under that vail of human flesh which he assumed, God really dwelt; and whatever he did or said, the Father was always well pleased with him: and it could not be otherwise; for he neither did nor said any thing, but what he had in commandment from the Father.

We need say nothing of the specimens he gave of almighty creating power, which he shewed forth in the miracles which he wrought; nor of perfect knowledge and wisdom, that he could never be mistaken in any of his measures. Goodness is the attribute we are most naturally interested in; and there is not one more generally mistaken. Our indigence makes us consider beneficence as at least a necessary ingredient, if not the very essence of it, as if God could not be good unless he made every creature as happy as he can. This at first sight appears such an absurdity, that no body will profess it. But many are loath to allow, that a good God will suffer any creature of his to be finally miserable. But so far is perfect goodness from

from such a tendency, that it is really the most terrible character that can be, to a bad being; even more so than justice itself, which is only a certain modification of goodness. Perfect goodness cannot bear evil, but must root it out of his world, and absolutely destroy it. It is that very work of the devil the Son of God came to destroy. And as there is no real evil in the world but sin, there are only two ways in which it can be destroyed: the first is, by making a separation between the sinner and his sin, and thus destroying sin, and saving the sinner; or where that is not effected, by destroying the sinner and sin together. Now, it is the very business for which our Lord came into the world, to save his people from their sins. But when men will not come to him that they may have life, he has declared plainly the judgement he will certainly give against them, "even everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power."

It must therefore be but a very small gleam of hope that can be gathered from this general view of the divine goodness. It is from the riches of sovereign grace, mercy,

mercy, and compassion, that the hope of such creatures as we are, poor helpless sinners, must spring. These are views of God which are no where to be had but in Jesus Christ; and there they are all to be seen in their greatest perfection, such as not only gives hope, but the strongest assurance in the most desperate-like state which a sinner can possibly be in. For when we look further into this his amiable image, we must perceive the highest benevolence, kindness, and goodwill to mankind; such a tenderness of sympathy and compassion, and such bountiful and disinterested beneficence, as the world never had one instance of; ever ready to instruct the ignorant, to relieve the miserable and wretched, and to heal every ailment of body or mind; no case so desperate as to exceed his power, nor any sinner so vile as to be below his notice. Seven devils, or even a legion, possessing one person, did not hinder the sinner's acceptance; and the greatness of the sins which were forgiven, only made the sinner to love him more.

All the cures he performed either on the souls or bodies of men, with all their endearing

endearing circumstances, which were very many, are so many pictures, if we may express it so, of the mind of God. His marvellous love and kindness to mankind, and his tender mercies, which have been for ever of old.

There was one thing further in the conduct of Jesus which deserves our particular notice, viz. the absolute contempt which he showed of all those things which the world are so madly fond of, the riches and honours, the power and glory, and all the pleasures and enjoyments of a present life. And this shewed at once how contemptible all these things are in God's eye, and how much they are below the regard of a perfect man; so that our fondness for any the most agreeable of them, instead of being an accomplishment, is a sure evidence of the degenerate baseness of a mind sunk greatly below the standard allotted by the creator.

This leads us forward to another invaluable advantage we have in the character of Jesus Christ, viz. a pattern of perfection, which we may safely follow, and the only one we may follow without exception. For there we see how God himself would

would live, nay, and how he did live, when among men, in the person of Jesus Christ. He not only brought life and immortality into open light by his resurrection from the dead, but opened up, and went before, as the captain of salvation, in the way that leads to that eternal life, setting an example that we may follow his steps. And accordingly we find, that in all the directions he gave for entering into life, this was always the concluding part, *Follow me*. And thence he lays it down as a general rule, "If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be." And the Apostle John speaks the same language: "He that faith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked."

This is a matter of the utmost importance, and is not to be accomplished by observing some one or more pieces of his example, or to copy from thence this or the other virtue, as I have heard some speak. The whole must be taken together; and, as the Apostle wisely directs, "the same mind must be in us that was in Christ Jesus;" and, as another advises,

ses, "Arm ourselves with the same mind
"which was in him when he suffered for
"us in the flesh:" A large field, and which
deserves to be very particularly considered,
as indeed it takes in the whole system of
practical Christianity. I can only point out
a few generals, which will give some no-
tion of the whole.

And here, in the first place, if we mind
to follow him, we must set out upon the
same principles of truth he did. We can-
not indeed propose to attain such com-
prehensive views as he had of the spiritual
and eternal world; without which, it is
impossible to attain any right knowledge
of the present one in which we live: but
he has given us his mind concerning both
the one and the other; and if we dare be-
lieve his testimony, we shall see both in
the same light in which he, who perfectly
understood them, did; especially with the
advantage which we have of his example,
and the manner in which he treated both;
the contempt he always showed for a pre-
sent world, and the high regard he had to
his heavenly Father, and the glory of the
unseen eternal world. It is only by this
testimony that we can know any thing of
these

these unseen things, and exactly as the strength of our faith or belief of this testimony is, such will be our conformity to his views of these things.

But his was not a mere speculative knowledge of them, it was reduced into a system of perfect wisdom. All his sentiments were formed on his infallible views of truth, so that he could never be mistaken; and all his judgements, both of persons and things, were equally infallible. This is such a perfection as no other man can pretend to. But all our sentiments, that is, our way of thinking and judging of things, must be formed upon the same standard; to esteem and despise, to love and hate, to hope and fear, &c. and of course to pursue and avoid every thing, just as he did before us. Here our wisdom lies, and this is the only cure for our natural folly. He who sees things as he did, the truth, reality, and worth of eternal and unseen things, and has his heart and affections formed upon them, must entertain the same contempt he had of all that a present world has either to allure or frighten us with. Where-ever the love of God is

so shed abroad in the heart as to become the ruling principle, there the world loses its hold; the light of his glory, as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ, casts shame and disgrace on all worldly glory.

There was one thing our Lord was most remarkable in, and which makes a great part of the pattern he hath set us; I mean, his perfect self-denial, and absolute resignation to his heavenly Father's will, and the most perfect acquiescence in it. Thus we find him always professing, that he came not into the world to do his own will, but the will of him that sent him. Nor did he ever seek his own glory, but his heavenly Father's; and to this great end the whole business of his life was devoted. The Apostle sets this self-denial and resignation in a very strong light, by the high rank which he held: For "though he was in the "form of God," and possessed all the glory and blessedness which belong to such an exalted station; yet he willingly "made himself of no reputation, was found in fashion as a man, took upon him the form "of a servant," and submitted to all the sorrows and sufferings that could take place without

without sin. In conformity to this, he taught his disciples to say in their prayers, "Thy will be done;" and made it the first step every one should take who proposed to follow him, "To deny themselves." I do but just observe how shamefully this precept, or rather solemn certification, is commonly trifled away: when we prevail with ourselves to renounce any trifling gratification, we give it the name of *mortification* and *self-denial*. But it is ourselves we are called to deny; and it is the flesh, or old man, all that we are by Adam, which we are called to mortify, resigning ourselves entirely to the will and disposal of our heavenly Father.

What our blessed pattern adds in that certification he gave his hearers, determines the meaning of this part, and carries the resignation recommended by his example to its proper height: he was obedient to the death, the death of the cross; and if we mean to follow him, we must do as he did, deny ourselves, and take up our cross. It were to be wished that this was the only instance where the scripture-meaning is obscured or mistaken, by applying to the words the sense which

which has been affixed to them in later times. We have, I know not how, affixed the name of crosses to the little ruffles we meet with in common life; and when we can any how submit without fretting and murmuring, we flatter ourselves that we have fulfilled his command, and may pass among his followers. But the words he uses had no such meaning when he uttered them. The cross was the instrument of death; and to take up one's cross, was to act as convicted criminals did, submitting themselves to the death awarded them: and as that is the case of every child of Adam, nothing less can be meant by it, than acknowledging the justice of the sentence, and accordingly resigning and giving up the life which it strikes at, (and that is unquestionably all the life we have from the first Adam), into the hands of justice, to be destroyed, and have a final end put to it.

This is a very hard saying to the children of Adam; it is renouncing and giving up their all; and which indeed is impossible for man to do, but in the strength of that faith and hope through which our blessed pattern endured the cross,

cross, and despised at once the shame and the torment, because he knew that it was in this way he was to enter into his glory. In this prospect he cheerfully resigned himself to a scene of sufferings, such as no man, either before or after him, was or could be exposed to, having the curse which sin had brought on all the children of Adam, the whole weight and burden of it, lying upon him; and thus "being made perfect through sufferings, he became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him."

This leads us into a further, and, if possible, a more interesting view of Jesus Christ; as in him we have not only life and immortality fairly brought to light, but the foundations of faith and hope laid so strong, that what seemed absolutely impossible for man to do, becomes the easiest and most eligible thing in the world. The resigning and giving up the forfeited life we have from Adam into the hands of justice, comes out to be no more but exchanging it for one, in all the views that can be taken of it, infinitely preferable; as if a condemned criminal, by submitting to the sentence, should come to the possession of

of a rich inheritance; which is the very comfortable view that the Apostle gives us of this change: "We know, that if our
" earthly house of this tabernacle were
" dissolved, we have a building of God,
" a house not made with hands, eternal
" in the heavens." And surely those who have such a prospect, will be longing after that blessed hope.

Among all the wise and gracious purposes which were answered by fixing mankind in the state wherein they are now found, this is one of the most gracious and beneficent, That every man must, if he has any reflection at all, find himself in such circumstances, as that nothing but absolutely free grace can relieve him, and that it is absolutely impossible he can live any other way; and it is really astonishing, that any man of common sense could ever overlook such an obvious and important truth, or entertain the least shadow of hope on any other grounds.

It is as plain, that the most high God must be absolute master of his own grace, to give or to with-hold his free favours, and to extend them to whom he pleases, and in what manner, and by what means, he pleases.

pleases. We need not, for supporting or illustrating this claim, suppose, that the creator took any advantage against mankind from the transgression of their first parents; much less that he acquired any new rights by their forfeiture. The case would have been just the same had they been all created in the state they are now in; only we should have wanted that warning-piece, and the instruction it gives us, how impossible it is for a creature to live any other way, than by the mere grace of the creator.

The native and necessary consequence of this is, that no creature can have any reason to expect any additional favour whatsoever, or any higher station in God's world, than that which he finds himself in, whether placed there by his creator, or which he himself hath chosen: I say, which he himself hath chosen; because it is not only a possible, but a very common case among men, to sink themselves, either by indolence, or something worse, into a state greatly below that which the constitutional powers the creator gave them, might either have kept them in, or raised them to. And surely no man will

imagine, that the creator is bound to repair the waste that the creature hath made. Nothing but a declaration from himself of what he will do by a sovereignly free promise, can warrant any such expectation.

Such a promise, or a declaration equivalent to a promise, we find has been in the world from the time that sin and death entered together. By what the Apostle says to Titus, we are warranted to take it greatly higher; for he says expressly, that "God, who cannot lie, promised that very eternal life which they had the hope of, *before the world began.*" And that was surely before Adam had sinned, or was so much as created: And it is evident, that there was none then to receive the promise, but he who was set up from everlasting, the same who appeared in due time in the person of Jesus Christ. The same apostle confirms it, and carries it yet further; for he says to Timothy, and says it as an acknowledged truth that no Christian in those days had any doubt about, that this grace was not only *promised*, but actually *given them in Christ Jesus* in that antemundane period.

Our Lord gives us the progress of this promise,

promise, in what he says of it to his disciples under another notion, very common with him and his apostles, *the kingdom of God, the kingdom of heaven*, and often simply, *the kingdom*; where, he says, the subjects are all admitted to eat and drink at his table; as much as to say, they are abundantly provided out of his fulness. This kingdom, he says, *the Father hath appointed to him*. So our translators render it: but the word, in the original, signifies “the making a thing over;” whether by free gift, or on certain terms or conditions, it does not specify. By this deed of the Father, he has the property vested in himself, and full powers to convey it to whom he pleases. And thus “it pleased the Father, that in him all “fulness should dwell;” that is, all the grace that ever was to be shown to mankind.

Thus we have Jesus Christ standing at the head of mankind in the new creation, and in relation to the spiritual and eternal world, just as Adam stood in the first creation, and in relation to this present world; and the truth, as it is in Jesus, will be found to answer the figure

with great exactness. There was, and it was absolutely necessary there should be, a very great odds between the two in many respects. The Apostle gives us the principal ones : “ The first Adam was “ made a living soul, the second a quick-
“ ening spirit ; the first was of the earth,
“ earthy, the second was the Lord from
“ heaven.” But in other respects they agree with surprising exactness ; which may reasonably determine us to think, that the first creation, and the way in which men were brought into the world by that original constitution, was designed by divine wisdom to be a sort of sensible image and representation of the spiritual, and therefore invisible, manner in which men are brought into the spiritual and eternal world : and accordingly it is upon this plan that all the descriptive accounts we have of it are formed.

By what we were just now observing from the Apostle, and our Lord’s own words, we find he received the grant of the kingdom, or eternal life, from the Father’s hand, and had it actually lodged in him, as our first father had the life of all mankind lodged in him : and as there is no
way

way of entering among mankind in this world, but by deriving from Adam in the course of what is called *natural generation*, no more can any one have access to the spiritual world, without deriving from Jesus Christ in the course of regeneration, or by that new birth in which our Lord instructed Nicodemus. Each of these lives resemble the original from which they are drawn. Adam's children, all of them, bear the image of the earthy man, and their life is of the same kind, necessarily terminating in death. The children by the second birth, are all formed upon the heavenly man, from whom they derive their life. They all bear his image, and their life is, like the quickening Spirit from whom they derive it, spiritual and eternal.

But that which calls for our special observation is this: Both received the terms by which their respective lives were to be held, as they were the only two who, each in his several kind, had access to deal directly and immediately with God. The terms were very different, and so was the event. Those given to the first man, were the easiest that can well be imagined: but

but he did not fulfil them; and by his transgression, entailed death on all his descendents, along with that life which he conveys to them. "Thus by one man
" sin entered into the world, and death
" by sin; and so death hath passed upon
" all men, for that all have sinned."
And there should have been an end of all flesh, if the sovereign gift of grace had not prevented it.

The terms on which the kingdom, or eternal life, was granted to the Lord from heaven, the quickening Spirit, or as himself expresses it, *the commandment which he received from the Father*, which some have, not improperly, called *the law of the Mediator*, were indeed the hardest that could be imposed upon any creature, and such as none but himself could have fulfilled. They are all summed up in his obedience unto the death, even the death of the cross: A kind of death which was marked out by God himself many hundred years before, and a curse pronounced on him that was hanged on it. And yet it was not simply submitting even to this death that could answer the purpose; but a continued sinless obedience, and overcoming
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that very tempter who had seduced and ruined, as he thought, the first of mankind. Accordingly we find, that he was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil, with all the advantage his hellish malice could desire. And thus we are led forward to consider the seed of the woman, the seed of Abraham and David, the anointed chosen One, in that relation to mankind which he has chosen to stand in; and it concerns us much to know how he has acquitted himself in this great and important trust, that we may at once know how to apply to him, and give him the glory that is due unto his name.

C H A P. VII.

View of Christ as a Priest.

BY what we were just now observing, we may see the reason of that title which we find often given to him, and which, in effect, he assumes to himself, his Father's *servant*. The Prophet Isaiah has given us his commission in few, but very

very comprehensive words: "He, JEHO-
"VAH, said, It is a light thing that thou
"shouldst be my servant to raise up the
"tribes of Jacob, and to restore the pre-
"served of Israel: I will also give thee
"for a light to the Gentiles, that thou
"mayst be my salvation unto all the
"ends of the earth." And hence the
comfortable titles of *Saviour* and *Redeemer*
take their rise, which express the general
design and issue of his whole ministry,
and which we shall meet with, after we
have considered, by what means, and in
what character, he carries on and accom-
plishes this great work.

I formerly observed, how he is repre-
sented by Moses and the prophets in three
distinct views; as a prophet, priest, and
king; all united in the one person of the
Messiah, or God's Anointed. There is one
general character which comprehends them
all, "*Mediator* between God and man,"
which has been, and yet may be mista-
ken, by applying the modern sense of
that word, and making it the same with
a peace-maker, one whose business it is to
go between, and make up matters between
two parties at variance. He is indeed both
the

the peace-maker and the peace-keeper between God and man. But that is far from reaching either the import of the word, or the extent of his office. The word denotes a middle person standing between God and man, and managing the whole correspondence between them: That as God never speaks to man, nor bestows any favours of any kind, but by him; so no man can come to God, nor apply to him with acceptance, but by his means, "who is the way, the truth, and the life."

He is particularly designed, "The Mediator of the *Covenant*;" that is, of the constitution of grace, or grant of life, that order which God has established for dispensing his mercy and grace to perishing sinners. Which designation has by some been thought sufficiently answered, if he has procured such a mitigation of the original law of perfection, and such gentle terms of acceptance, as men in our situation may come up to. But the laws of God admit of no mitigation, but must be punctually and literally fulfilled, without any alteration or favourable construction whatsoever: and, I think, we are hardly warranted to say, that the Mediator ob-

tained even the covenant itself, the constitution or grant of grace, though it is by him the whole is made effectual: "For all things are of God, who reconciles mankind to himself by Jesus Christ;" who, in the whole of his ministration, acts precisely by the commandment he received from the Father.

The true import of this title is expressed by another, which is used but once in terms, but often, I might say always, supposed and referred to, "The surety of the covenant;" which has been in a manner confined to one branch of his office, viz. his undertaking, in behalf of sinners of mankind, to make out that obedience to the law in which they failed. But supposing this to be the case, that makes him only a surety for a party, which is a quite different thing from being surety of the covenant, whose business it is to see all the parts and articles of it punctually fulfilled, both the terms on which the grant stands, and the promised blessings conveyed, precisely as they stand in the grant.

The Apostle, in his epistle to the Hebrews, uses these two titles promiscuously, and explains them by what was perfectly

well

well understood by those to whom he wrote, viz. the office and business of *priesthood*, which, as we are well informed, consisted precisely in acting as mediators between God and the people, and sureties for the putting away of sin to the people; but not at all as sureties for them any further than by performing the terms on which forgiveness was promised, viz. offering the appointed sacrifices. And the whole of that epistle, and all the reasoning there, clear and strong as it is, stands on this one proposition, That what the priests were under the old covenant, or grant of the land of Canaan to the Israelitish nation, that Jesus Christ was in the new and better covenant, the grant of eternal life to all mankind who will receive him.

The account the Apostle gives of the priesthood affords a very distinct view of it: "Every high priest taken from among men, is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, (or rather wherein they have to do with God), to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sin."

And had not the wisdom of God instituted such an office among men, the me-

diation and intercession of Christ is such a singular thing, that we should never have been able to form any tolerable conceptions of it, or found words and language to speak about it. There is nothing like it either in the natural or moral world, but what has been copied from this original. Priests and sacrifices have been found in every nation; and thence an image, more or less perfect, laid to our hands, by which we may attain more or less perfect views of this very important subject; and the better we are acquainted with these emblems and figures, the more perfect will our views be of the truth, as it is in Jesus.

We have therefore great reason to be thankful for, what the wisdom of the world so much despises, the very particular account we have of the institution of the priesthood, and the several kinds of sacrifices, for answering the occasions and different cases of the worshippers; the several kinds of washings and purifications, from the several sorts of defilement and pollution, which disqualified them from joining with the congregation, and approaching the place of God's presence; which,

which, in a very lively manner, represent at once the guilt and pollution of sin, and that fear and shame with which they are naturally attended. In these consists what the Apostle very justly terms *an evil conscience*, which must be some how or other removed, and what he calls *the conscience* (or rather *consciousness*) of sins, taken away, before any offender can acquire confidence enough to appear in the presence of God; which he never will do, until he is sure of finding acceptance.

This must be the greatest distress a creature can be in, whenever it is felt. But felt it never will be, until the sinner knows what sin is, and the unhappiness of being shut out from God, and exposed to the inconceivable effects of his anger, and irreconcilable enmity against sin; which, it must always be minded, is but the native tendency of his perfect goodness. And hence it was so ordered in that wise constitution, that no man could have the benefit of the remedy provided, the sacrifice which put away the sin, but he that was sensible of the absolute need of it; for thus the order stood.

The offender must bring the sacrifice
to

to the priest; and that not of his own chusing, or what he thought best and fittest, but that which God had appointed in that particular case.

He must make a free and full confession of his sin over the sacrifice. This was often, if not always, accompanied with laying his hand on the head of the victim, which was the sign of its being substituted in his place, to bear that punishment which he had deserved. And it is to be observed, that no repentance, acknowledgement, or confession, however sincere, could be accepted in any other manner.

The priest, who, by his office, stood bound to receive the sacrifice, took the sin upon himself, to put it away, by offering the victim in the manner appointed in the law. But if he failed in any point, the punishment of that lay upon himself, and was not imputed to the offender from the time that the sacrifice was taken off his hand.

But all this would have been but a slender foundation for the faith and hope of a sinner, had he been left there. The divine institution indeed promised much, as he might thence be assured, that there was
some

some great purpose to be answered by it. But had it not been for the promise annexed to the sacrifice, that the sin should be forgiven, he must have been left in great uncertainty about the event. But however ignorant he may be supposed to have been of the reason of the institution, and however unpromising-like the means might appear, he might with great assurance rest on the word of a faithful God: and therefore the business of the priest did not end with the offering, until by the sprinkling of the blood he had made the atonement, and secured the promised blessing.

The service of the great day of atonement, when the high priest acted on behalf of the whole people, was the completest representation of Christ's priesthood. I need not enter into particulars: it may suffice to observe, that the high priest at that time only, entered into the most holy place, presented the blood with incense, and came out, and blessed the people in the name of JEHOVAH.

There is one circumstance which we find the Apostle takes particular notice of,
 " That no man taketh this honour unto
 " himself,

The grant of the Law of Moses and all temporal blessings, even like itself were granted by God to the Israelites upon the terms of their complete obedience to the Law of God. Delivered on Mount Sinai. So eternal spiritual life and the blessings of heaven are granted by God to the spiritual Israelites upon the terms of their complete obedience to the spirit of the Law of God, namely the perfect love of him, delivered to man by Jesus Christ.

and as the offenders against the Sinaiical or Mosaiical Law were promised forgiveness upon their offering certain sacrifices in faith and

“himself, but he that is called of God, “as was Aaron.” This is a material point, upon which the whole success of this ministration depends. And indeed, until we are secured in this, our expectations must at best be but wavering and uncertain. We are not left at an uncertainty here. The Apostle tells us, that “Christ did not glorify himself, to be “made an high priest;” but was installed with a solemnity such as never any other was, viz. with the oath of the Most High; and that his priesthood was of an order, too, greatly superior to that of Aaron, the priest and the king being united in one person; nay, that he was a king too of a peculiar kind; “King of righteousness, “and King of peace:” for so the Apostle interprets the name and place of Melchizedek, who appears to have been marked out in the history for a figure of a perpetual priesthood, without beginning or ending, without predecessor or successor.

We are not told by the Psalmist, whose words are quoted by the Apostle, when this oath was given: but it must have been as ancient as the covenant or constitution to which it belonged, and given at the

*reliance upon the promise of God, so the
offenders against the spiritual Law revealed by
Christ are promised pardon upon their offering*

IV. 10

as a PRIEST.

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the same time that the terms of the grant were laid upon the Redeemer, and eternal life lodged in his hand. Nor is it any objection, that he did not enter upon the execution of his office until he came in the flesh. The all-wise God knew perfectly whom he had to deal with; he had laid the burden on one who had strength to bear it, and was as faithful as he was able. He could see at one glance from one end of time to another, and it was the same to him as if it had been done.

The high worth and dignity of the priest promises fair, and our expectations must be greatly raised when we consider his sacrifice. The Apostle says, "he must have something to offer." Burnt offerings of beasts, and such sacrifices as the Mosaical priests offered, were all rejected; and indeed much below his dignity. "Through the eternal Spirit he offered himself without spot unto the Father," and thus put away sin for ever by that one sacrifice, and perfected for ever all those who are sanctified. The Apostle's reasoning is strong and conclusive: "If the blood of bulls, and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the
VOL. II. T "unclean,

*the spiritual sacrifice (the victim in which is our Lord Jesus Christ) in faith
and reliance upon the promise made by God of pardon for his sake to those
who believe in Jesus Christ and in the merits of his atoning sacrifice. See page 153.*

“unclean, sanctified unto the purifying
“of the flesh; how much more shall the
“blood of the Son of God purge our
“consciences from dead works to serve
“the living God?”

I need but just observe, that all the expressions we find made use of in the record to describe the nature and design of his death and suffering, such as, his dying and laying down his life for his people, giving his life a ransom, redeeming them by his blood, &c. all of them appear but so many equivalent terms, by which the effect of his sacrifice is explained and set forth; so that there does not seem any necessity for a plain Christian's entering into the many intricate debates which have been broached concerning the nature and effects of what is called *Christ's satisfaction*,
• which can mean no more but his perfect
• fulfilment of the terms of life; and when
• we know that the sacrifice was accepted,
• we know all that we have any occasion for.

But however high our expectations may be justly raised by the views of such a priest, and such a sacrifice, (and we may very firmly assure ourselves that they will
answer

answer all the purposes for which such a ministration was intended); yet until that is certainly known, we must still be at a loss; and we can know it no other way than the Old-Testament worshippers did, viz. by the declaration and promise annexed to the sacrifice. So far as that goes, our faith and confidence in the sacrifice may, and ought to go, and no further. The Mosaical sacrifices had no more annexed to them but the forgiveness of sin, and that answered their design. Pardon is the native intention of a sacrifice. This is what the sinner is most anxious to obtain; and with good reason, not only as it relieves the present and most sensibly felt distress, but as it is absolutely necessary to open the way for, and to render the sinner capable of, receiving all further favours and benefactions from the hand of God, who is so essentially good and holy, that he can have no dealings with a sinner in the way of grace, until sin is taken away.

But had the promise, or grant annexed to this sacrifice, stopt there, we must have found ourselves in no better circumstances than those who applied to the Mosaic sacrifices,

sacrifices, and could expect no more but to be restored to the possession of the forfeited life, and that without any security against falling again into the same unhappy circumstances. Indeed it neither was nor could be the intention of our great high priest, nor of him who appointed the sacrifice, to restore any one to Adam's life. There was an irrevocable sentence given against it; the same which goes so often under the name of a curse, and which never leaves the subject it fastens on, until it has brought it to absolute destruction. Adam's child must die. But then, in the virtue of this great sacrifice, there comes along with the promise of pardon a free grant or deed of gift of what is infinitely better, even eternal life.

But there is one circumstance, in which it is not unlikely some will imagine, that the Jews had greatly the advantage of us. They had the sacrifice at hand, and it was no great journey to find the priest, who, they knew, might not refuse to take their sin off their hand: and an advantage it was, if it be a higher privilege to live by sense, than to live by faith; which we indeed must do, if we propose to make
any

any thing of this sacrifice, or to have any dealings with this great high priest. And yet, after all, there was more of faith, even in their service, than every one will suspect. Faith was the very life and spirit of it; without which, it could not subsist. I do not mean only the necessity there was of looking beyond the figure and shadow, to the great high priest and sacrifice represented thereby; without which it was a mere carcase, a dead image, which could profit no further than a present world, and the present perishing life; but even for that they had no security but what arose from the divine institution, and the promise of forgiveness on the right offering of the sacrifice; for which, in most cases, they had no more but a mere implicit faith in the fidelity of the priest, whose character very often afforded very little encouragement to trust him in a matter of such moment.

As our great high priest, and his sacrifice, his instalment and fidelity, give vast advantages to our faith; so in a special manner doth the assurance we have of the acceptance of his sacrifice. When the high priest entered into the holiest with the

the blood of his sacrifice, the sinner had no security for his being accepted, but that he came out alive. Now "our high priest is not entered into the holy places made with hands, but into heaven itself, there to appear in the presence of God for us." It is true he is not come out again, as the Jewish high priest did. But hence ariseth our strongest assurance, that he has done the business effectually; and by his one sacrifice so put away sin, that it shall be remembered no more. So that he has nothing left him to do, but to dispense and give forth that life which is now absolutely lodged in his hand, until he comes again, once for all, to receive his people to himself, "that where he is, there they may be also."

Thus we find all things standing as in the record which the Apostle John tells us God has made concerning his Son, or the testimony he has given, viz. "That God hath given to us eternal life, and that this life is in his Son: so that he that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son, hath not life." Which, whosoever believes not, he assures us, makes God a liar, because he doth not believe

believe his testimony. This, one should think, might fully determine what has wrought much disturbance among Christians, viz. who the *us* are to whom God is said to have given eternal life. No body sure will doubt of his having given it to such as are really put in possession of it. All the doubt is, whether God has made such a deed of gift, such a grant of life, as every one who hears it is bound to believe, with such a firmness of faith, as shall determine him to flee to it as a refuge to lay hold on the hope set before him there. And how can that be a question, when all who hear the gospel are not only called, but commanded, under the most terrible penalty, to believe in Jesus Christ, to put their trust in his sacrifice and intercession, with the strongest assurances, that in this way they certainly shall obtain pardon and eternal life? But if the great high priest and his sacrifice are either despised or neglected, they surely can have no more to expect, than the despisers of Moses's law, "to die without mercy."

The Apostle gives us the state of the old Israelites as a parallel case to those who live under the gospel, and have the testimony

testimony of God declared to them : and indeed it is so parallel, that it seems to have been made for the purpose. The grant of the land of Canaan was given to Abraham, the father of that people, and in such terms, that God himself, who cannot lie, or mistake in wording it, says, Gen. xv. 18. "Unto thy seed have I *given* "this land." He sent Moses well attested to conduct the people into it, with the strongest assurances, that he had taken it upon himself to put them in possession; and showed such signs and displays of almighty power, as could leave no room to entertain any doubt of his being abundantly able to do what he had promised. And when it is further considered, that he had given them a body of laws which could not be put in practice until they were in possession of the land for which these laws were calculated, who can doubt of their being bound to believe that God would certainly perform what he had promised? But they did not believe it. And when there was nothing left them to do but to go forward, they would not, because they did not find themselves able to fight and conquer those who were in possession; and, in the event, only two of all the multitude

itude were permitted to enter in; the carcasses of the rest fell in the wilderness, because they believed not God, nor trusted in his salvation.

Our Lord himself gives us another case, which he has declared perfectly parallel, and therefore must be depended on: "As the brazen serpent was lifted up in the wilderness, so shall the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believes on him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." He compares the promise of eternal life, as it stands annexed to the sacrifice he has made of himself, to the promise of healing by the brazen serpent; and believing in him, to looking on that; as the general call stands directed by the prophet to all the ends of the earth to look unto him and be saved. Now, as none would look at the brazen serpent with any expectation from it, but they who believed the promise, (and they certainly would); so they who believe the promise of pardon and life annexed to the sacrifice of Christ, will as certainly believe in him, and rest their hearts and their hopes there. In both cases, there is equally free access for all

to whom the promise is sent. But if any of the bitten Israelites, on any consideration, refused or neglected to look, they perished without remedy. And who can complain, if the neglecters of Christ and his salvation perish in the same manner? Will their unbelief or perverseness make void the faithful promise? It stands precisely as it did, and as it does to those who believe. But if it is not believed, it can have no other effect than if it had not been made.

There was one thing I observed about the office of priesthood, which it may be proper to take in here, as it effectually obviates every exception that can be made against the gift of pardon and life in its utmost extent, viz. That the priest by his office was bound to receive every man that came with his sacrifice, whatever he was, or however otherwise qualified or distinguished. Our great high priest has declared the same concerning himself, That "him that cometh to him," whosoever he is, or whatsoever he hath done or not done, "he will in no wise cast out." Nay, and that he stands bound by the commandment of the Father to give him
eternal

eternal life. The gift indeed, by the very terms of the grant, and the only way in which life is or can be conveyed to any of Adam's race, is so confined to Jesus Christ, that "he that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son, hath not life." But, at the same time, all things are laid so ready in him, that if any comes short of it, it must be, as himself hath stated it, "because they will not come to him that they may have life."

I have said nothing of the several washings and purifications we find so much and so minutely insisted on in the law of Moses. They were very necessary under that dispensation to keep up a dutiful sense of the purity and holiness of that God with whom they had to do; for this we find given as the reason for what we should reckon the most trifling of them, "that he, JEHOVAH, their God, was among them, and that he was holy;" and, at the same time, to keep them carefully upon their guard against that abominable thing sin, the only real evil which he has declared his soul hates: and they answer the same purposes to us now. But we have one complete relief in the fountain

which is opened for sin and for all uncleanness: "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." And thus the Apostle John represents him as coming by water and blood, alluding probably to the blood and water which flowed from his heart pierced by the soldier's spear. This does effectually what all the legal purifications were but shadows of; it purgeth the conscience from dead works; and instead of that slavish fear and dread which an evil conscience naturally produces, gives the vilest sinner boldness and confidence to enter into the holiest, by that new and living way which our great high priest has consecrated through the vail of his own flesh.

C H A P. VIII.

Administration and discharge of Christ's office towards Sinners.

THE foundations of the Christian's faith and hope appear laid so strong in the sacrifice of our great high priest, and the full and comprehensive promise of pardon
and

and life annexed to it, that one would think none who has any knowledge of it should need the Apostle's exhortation, "to draw near with a true heart, and in full assurance of faith and hope, when they have their hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience." And truly all the discouragements a serious person can possibly meet with are so abundantly provided against in Jesus Christ, that whatever difficulties arise in the way of believing, must flow from partial or mistaken views, either of the priest, or his sacrifice, (and commonly both go together); or from mistaking the import and meaning of the grant and promise annexed to the sacrifice.

I believe they may be all reduced to two; felt unworthiness, and weakness; which commonly go together, and are the very same which betrayed the old Israelites into their unbelief. The record is so far from discouraging a sense either of the one or of the other, that great pains are taken to strike the feeling of them both, greatly deeper than any child of Adam would chuse. All the accounts we have given us of the state of mankind represent them

them not only as unworthy of any favour, and less than the least of all mercies, but as most worthy of the severest punishment the creator can inflict upon an obstinate rebellious creature. Our powers are represented every way as defective as our merit; so far are we from being able to fulfil any law, even when we have brought it as low as can be done with any tolerable decency, and substituted what is called sincerity instead of perfection, that we are assured we cannot receive, nor even know the things of God; and if so, how can we either repent or reform to any purpose? Our Lord hath assured us in express terms, that faith is so much the gift of God, that "no man can come to him unless the Father draw him:" nay, that without him, his best disciples can do nothing. The Apostle Paul, who was undoubtedly one of the most eminent of them, sets his seal to this, acknowledging, that he and his fellow-apostles were not sufficient of themselves so much as to *think* any thing as of themselves: and what can be more expressive of human weakness than this?

But all this is no more than is absolutely

ly necessary to bring man back to his right creature-state, his primitive nothingness, that he may acknowledge himself debtor to the free sovereign grace of his creator, for all he either is, or hopes to be: A hard saying to the vain sons of Adam; but an absolutely necessary one; and no more than every reasonable creature is bound to acknowledge, that the creator is absolutely master of his own favours. This point the Apostle carries as high as it can be: "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God who sheweth mercy." And again, "He has mercy on whom he will have mercy; and whom he will he hardeneth." And he takes notice of the only thing that ever has, or ever can be urged against it, "Why doth he yet find fault?" Which he answers by another question: "Who art thou, O man! who repliest against God?" A question, which, if it is seriously considered, will not only silence, but convict every child of Adam. There is a conscience in man, in the worst of men, that if suffered to bring to light what the heart is privy to, will tell him in strong terms how much he deserves to be hardened;

hardened : for God hardens none but by giving over striving with them, and leaving them to be led by their own lusts. He is under no obligation to interpose; and if he pleases to extend his mercy and grace even to the most unworthy, none can complain of any injury done them, unless they have some merit to plead. And when any one shall attempt to produce any thing that he has given to God, or done for God, which he has not first received from him, his claim no doubt will be considered : but little to his advantage; for by the laws and established order of the God of heaven, such a claim would be found downright rebellion, an attempting to live in a way that God has not appointed.

But however mortifying the doctrine of free sovereign grace, as the only measure of the divine proceedings with man, may be to the haughty reasoners of this world, it is as encouraging to the poor creature that knows himself, and is ready to sink under the terrors of divine majesty, the sense of his own vileness, and utter incapacity of doing any thing for relief. God has taken the saving of sinners into his
own

own hand; and he saves not by works of righteousness done by us, but according to his own mercy. Mercy indeed, and immense riches of grace: for he has made a grant of eternal life; and that it might come by way of free gift to us, he hath had all the terms of the grant perfectly fulfilled by his own blessed Son; lodged all the fulness of life in his hand, to be conveyed to all that will be so far reconciled to God, as to be willing to receive it.

I observed, that no discouragement or difficulty could arise in the way of believing, but from mistaking the import of the promise. And there is a fatal mistake which has misled many, and discouraged more, viz. That the eternal life which is in the grant, is something at a great distance, and that there is a long and weary way to go ere we get at it; that we must repent of our sins, and forsake them, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, mortify the flesh, with the lusts and affections of it, and lead holy and devout lives; and that all these are but the means in the use of which we attain the promised life, and the way that leads to it. And a weary

*The Doctrine of Belief
of Arminians refuted*

way it would be indeed, if that was the case. But blessed be God it is not. So far from it, that all these are but the consequences, the exercises, and actings of that new life which the dead sinner receives from Jesus Christ, before there is any such thing as a good motion in the heart; and which is gradually carried on, until the Christian attains the end of his faith and hope, in a perfect likeness to the glorious pattern, the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. To satisfy us fully in this, we need no more but observe how the consequences of our great high priest's fulfilling the terms of life, and having the fulness of it lodged in his hand, are stated in the record which God has made concerning him.

I need not observe the immediate consequence of his sacrifice, the perfect right which we may say he acquired; and acquired not for himself, any more than he died for himself, but for those for whom he died, or such as are interested in the sacrifice. To find out who these are, we need not go so far back as to God's eternal counsels and decree of election, nor even to Christ's intention with regard to the particular

particular persons who should receive the benefit of his sacrifice: for though it is certainly true, that all who ever had, or ever shall have, any interest in that sacrifice, were chosen from eternity, and given to the Son, (and in these terms Christ speaks to his heavenly Father, because both understood them perfectly); yet that is what no mortal can know, but by the event. We need no more but take things as he has laid them before us, and do as the old Israelites did; that is, believing the truth of the sacrifice, and of the grant of pardon and life affixed to it, rest our hearts and our hopes upon the faithfulness of him who hath promised, and sealed his promise by such a token of his unchangeable fidelity, as giving his own Son a sacrifice for the putting away of sin. By virtue of this gift and promise, the vilest sinner has as good a right to eternal life, as ever Adam could have had to his life by the most perfect and sinless obedience; and so much better and surer, as it is Christ's right which the believer holds by. And thus the righteousness of Christ is the believer's in the very nature of the thing, as the very design of his obedience

was to make out a right for him, and to seal it by his death. And thus we see very plainly how God could justify the ungodly, and be very just and righteous in doing so; insomuch that another apostle makes it not only a point of faithfulness, but even of justice, to forgive sin: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Confession of sin, we observed, was the first thing the transgressor of Moses's law did when he brought his sacrifice to the priest; and that was a plain acknowledgement of the forfeiture. From that time, he held what remained of his life, not by his former innocence, or any good deeds he had done, but purely in the virtue of the sacrifice, and the new grant of life annexed to it in the pardon of his sin. We are now freed from the expence and trouble of the sacrifice: God hath prepared one for all. But we cannot enter upon it, but by confessing over it, as the Jews did of old, and thus formally renouncing all pretensions to live in any other way, than in virtue of this sacrifice, and the grant of grace in Christ Jesus; or,

in

in other words, by taking up our cross, and following him through death, to be planted into the likeness of his resurrection, living by that life which is lodged in his hand, and which he, by the place which he holds, stands bound to communicate to us.

On this foundation the Apostle John builds the account he gives of God; very different indeed from what an evil conscience and our imperfect views of his ways with men present him to us: he saith, and repeats it for our greater assurance, "That God is love." This includes more than can be expressed in any other terms: it imports, that love is his very essence and nature; and he proves it by the love he has shown to the world, in giving his Son unto the death; as it was impossible to have loved them in any degree, if love had not been his very nature. No man, I may add, no creature, can love, but where he either sees or imagines some amiable quality in the object; (which, I suppose, has led so many to think that they must possess such qualities in order to recommend them to the divine favour): but God never beheld any thing lovely until

until he made it so; and he can make any object lovely that he pleases to set his love upon. "Herein is love, not that we loved God;" so far from it, that we were enemies in our minds through wicked works; and this enmity was so deeply rooted, that nothing could have reconciled the heart to him, but "that he loved us, and gave his only beloved Son to the death, that we might live through him;" the surest pledge that could have been given, that "with him he certainly will give us all things." And indeed in giving his Son, he really gives us all things: "For in him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." "And it is given to him, to the man Jesus the Mediator, to have all the fulness of life in himself, even as the Father hath." And consequently, when he is given, all the fulness of life is in truth given also.

Life, we had occasion to observe, is such a mysterious thing, that there is no way of accounting even for the continuation of it, but by the energy of almighty power: A power which is always exerted by that divine agent which bears the name of *Spirit*. The word, it is true, is variously

riously used : sometimes it denotes created spirits, sometimes the temper and disposition of spirit in man, and sometimes the gospel of Christ, which is the spirit of the law, and the means of conveying the Spirit of life. But the epithet of *Holy*, or *the Spirit of God*, or of *the Lord Christ*, are never applied to any created thing. This is that Comforter, or Advocate, whom our Lord promised to send to his disciples, when they were overwhelmed with grief on the prospect of his departing from them : An event which, he assured them, was greatly for their interest ; because that Comforter, who would be of more advantage to them than his presence with them, could not be given, until he should be admitted into the true holiest, as the high priest was into the figure ; and there enter upon the finishing part of his office, viz. blessing the people. But now, being set down with the Father on his throne, the priest and the king are united with the prophet, his standing character ; and he is vested with all power and authority to bless effectually ; that is, to put forth all divine power for raising the dead sinners of Adam's race to a new and never-ending

ending life, by this Holy Spirit whom he promised to send.

This promise was punctually fulfilled to the apostles in a manner that filled all who were witnesses to it with the greatest astonishment. But it is not to be so understood as if the same Spirit had never been sent before, and ceased when that first period was over. The Apostle Peter assures us, that it was the same Spirit which spoke in the prophets: "The Spirit of Christ testified in them." And the promise, we are sure, extends to the end of the world. Our Lord put that out of doubt, when he stood, and cried, "He that believes on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water;" which the Evangelist tells us, he spake of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive. There is indeed a great diversity of gifts, suited to different times and occasions. But one Spirit is the author of all, who divideth unto every one severally as he will, and in what manner he pleaseth, either more sensibly and perceptibly, as in the apostolic times, or in a more spiritual, and consequently imperceptible way; as our Lord says of the wind which bloweth where

where it listeth; which last, notwithstanding, is as real as the former, and produces the same effects in the hearts and spirits of men.

The office of this Spirit, as our Lord states it, is very extensive, and carries all the blessings in it which he has to bestow upon his disciples: for he says; "He shall take of mine, and shew it unto you." And lest any should imagine that the word *mine* implied some reserve, he adds, "All things that the Father hath, are mine." And thus the Spirit's business must be, to shew them all that God has to give. And these things he shews not merely to look at, (that would be a torture instead of a blessing), but to put us in possession of them, so far as we are capable of receiving them. And thus, when our exalted high priest sends his Holy Spirit, he blesses us effectually with all spiritual and heavenly blessings. And accordingly we find him set forth to our faith by such titles as import all that we can have any occasion for, in order to raise us to the highest measure both of perfection and happiness, in a perfect conformity unto our glorious head; that as we have born the image of

the earthy man, we may also bear the image of the heavenly.

The first blessing a dead sinner needs, must be life; for that is the ground-work of all activity and enjoyment. It stands in the grant annexed to the sacrifice; on the finishing and acceptance whereof, the fulness of life is lodged in the high priest's hand to bless all with, who, renouncing every other dependence, have recourse unto the sacrifice alone. But even this the dead sinner neither can nor will do, until he is blessed with the quickening Spirit. And yet, as things stand, he that hears the gospel is left absolutely inexcusable: for he certainly can be sensible of his inability and perverseness; he can hear the report; and what can hinder him to cry to him, who has declared he will not, nay, and may not, cast out any that come to him? And words cannot be more express than the assurance he has given, that "his heavenly Father will certainly
" give his Holy Spirit to those that ask
" him." Memorable are his words to the woman of Samaria: "If thou knewest the
" gift of God, and who it is that asketh
" thee, thou wouldst have asked of him,
" and

“and he would have given thee living water.” “Ask, and ye shall receive,” runs through the whole record. And surely those who will not ask, have no reason to complain if they want through their own perverseness.

Accordingly the first and leading title given to the Spirit of Christ is, *The Spirit of Life*. And he is so in two eminent respects, which take in the whole of his work in this view: first, as he unites to the fountain of life; and, secondly, as he is the means of conveyance by which it is derived for quickening the dead sinner, and maintaining and supporting his life through all the intermediate stages of it, until it arrive at full perfection.

Much has been said about the believer's union with Christ. The Apostle has established the necessity of it: “Search,” saith he, “and try yourselves; know ye not your own selves, how that Christ is in you, unless ye be reprobates?” I suspect its being called, as it is commonly, the *mystical* union, may have prejudiced some so far as to dwindle it away into a political or moral union: I only say, that those who do so, can expect no more but

a political or moral influence from Christ the head. The record carries it greatly further, and pitches upon the nearest, closest, and most vital unions known among men as models of it. But all fall short of what the Apostle gives us in one word: "He that is joined to the Lord, is "one spirit." And thence I would chuse to call it a *spiritual union*: the same Spirit which dwells in the Mediator Jesus, and which he receives not by measure, that anointing, whence he takes his title of *the Messiah*, or *the Christ*, dwells and abides in them. So the Apostle John represents the unction which he ascribes to every Christian, as producing the same effects which our Lord ascribes to the Holy Spirit.

And as he is thus the great, and, properly speaking, the only bond of union between Christ and the Christian; so he must be the only medium by which the life is conveyed. This must be an inexplicable secret. But we are helped to the conception of it by the method which he who understood it perfectly, took to explain it to Nicodemus, comparing it to the first, which we call the *natural birth*;

"Except

“ Except a man be born again, of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” And accordingly there is a new creature produced, as different from that which is produced in the first birth, as spirit is from flesh: “ That which is born of the flesh, is flesh; that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit.” The Evangelist John gives just such another description of the sons of God; that “ they are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor even of the will of man, but of God.” As nobody refuses the interposal of real creating power in the first birth, why should the express assertions in the record be brought down to mere figure and metaphor in the second? Nicodemus’s objection, “ How can these things be?” is all that can be said against it: and that will appear a very foolish one to those who acknowledge any creation at all.

But the Spirit of Christ is not given merely as a transient agent, to make the new creature, and then leave it to itself. That is what the creator never did with any of his works; and the new creature, spirit as it is, is no more capable of self-subsistence than

than any of the old creatures. The Spirit is therefore sent to abide with them for ever, to be the very principle of life in them. And this is the great distinguishing characteristic of the Christian life, which makes it of a quite different kind from all others whatsoever. For thus real Christians live by that very life which Christ himself lives by, and as we find the Apostle Paul describing it, who certainly understood it well: "It is not so much the man that lives, as it is Christ that lives in him." And therefore it is unto him, or, which is the same thing, to the grace of God, that he ascribes all the good that ever he was enabled to do: "Not I," said he, "but the grace of God which was in me." To him therefore he gives the glory of all.

And hence it is that we find, not only the life of the Christian, but all the powers of the new spiritual life, attributed to this same Spirit; and suitable titles are given him corresponding to these powers. Thus, for instance, he is styled, "the Spirit of truth;" and his business is, "to lead men into all truth;" "The spirit of wisdom and understanding; The giver of
" under-

“ understanding to know the things freely given of God.” And as he searches “ all things, even the deep things of God;” so our Lord and his apostles say, that “ he teacheth all things, and “ brings all things to the remembrance “ of his people,” as they have occasion for them. He is likewise styled *a spirit of grace and supplication*, both for instructing in what is fit and proper to ask, and giving confidence and boldness to enter into the holiest; to the very throne of grace, where mercy, and grace to help in every time of need, wait their acceptance. “ Ho, “ every one that thirsteth,” &c. is the voice of the Spirit. And not to insist further on such a copious subject, to him is committed the perfecting of the saints, and providing all that is necessary for that purpose; and, in one word, to “ keep them “ by the mighty power of God, through “ faith unto salvation.” So that, upon the whole, where Christ is given, the Holy Spirit is given to every one that will ask him in the faith of the promise as it stands in Christ: and where eternal life is given in its full extent, all that is necessary to the beginning, preserving, and

and continuing the spiritual life, is given also, till it shall attain its full perfection in the glory and happiness of the world to come; to which the great God, and our Saviour, shall finally bring all that have believed in his name. Upon the whole, then, the option stands thus: Whether shall we content ourselves with that pitiful perishing life we have from Adam, and take our venture of that everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power, which shall be the portion of those who reject the Saviour? or, shall we finally renounce and give up with a present life, and all that belongs to it, in the faith and hope of that eternal life which is held forth and pressed upon us in the gospel of Christ? An option this, about which one should think no man in his sober senses could deliberate a moment; but that every one should chearfully, and without hesitation, deny himself, take up his cross, the instrument of death, and follow Christ.

And hence we may easily see what that gospel-holiness, or sanctification, is, which comprehends the whole work of the Spirit, and has been, and yet is, most miserably

ferably mistaken by numbers of those who are called Christians; and perhaps by some who are really so. The name is taken from the Old-Testament writings, and the shadow and figure of it under that dispensation: and thence we must form our conceptions of it, if we propose to answer the New-Testament account of it, which is all formed upon that plan. There we find all the congregation of Israel were holy, the Levites more so, the priests yet more than the common Levites, and the high priest in a peculiar manner sanctified and made holy unto the Lord. I do not mention this as if I thought there was to be any such distinction among Christians: indeed the case will not admit of it; for there is one great high priest, the head of the body, the church; and all those whom he has loved, so as to wash them from their sins in his own blood, are made kings and priests unto God; or, as the Apostle calls them, *a royal priesthood*: but I do it to give us a more distinct view of the thing, in those several lights in which it stands, and in what was common to them all.

There are these four things which we

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find

find in them all, which seem to comprehend the whole of that sanctification we have in view to describe.

1. A separation from the profane community in which they were naturally lying, without any difference at all between them and the rest of mankind. Nay, we find God himself declaring, when he chose the Israelites, that they were the fewest, and the most perverse of all people. And it is to be observed, that from this separation, the name of sanctification is taken in the original language, which is the foundation of all the rest.

2. Washing, purifying, and cleansing those who were thus separated, from the defilement and pollution which they either had naturally, or had contracted in their common state. And here it is to be observed, that the foundation of all this was laid in the blood of the sacrifices, and performed by the application of that blood, in some shape or other, to the person who was to be sanctified. So that indeed there could be as little purification as remission, without shedding of blood.

3. The persons thus separated and cleansed were solemnly devoted and set apart to

God

God for that particular station to which they were separated, and the service and business which belonged to it. And,

4. They were provided in such gifts and powers as he who appointed them saw necessary for their respective offices. I have put both these together; because their anointing to the office, at once consecrated or set them apart for it, and gave them full power and authority to do every thing that belonged to it, which no other might with safety usurp in any degree; as King Uzziah, mighty as he was, felt to his cost; and as the anointing with oil was a symbol and sign of the true anointing, thence their powers and abilities were derived.

These are all so easily applied to the true sanctification by the blood and Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ, that it is needless to spend words upon the illustration of it. It may suffice to observe, how preposterous, and something worse, all the attempts of men are, to sanctify themselves, or make themselves holy, by any other means, or upon any other motives and views, than the great sacrifice and unction which our blessed Redeemer hath provided for his followers;

and, at the same time, how foolish the objection is, which has ever since the Apostle's days been urged with much vehemence against the doctrine of grace, and the free justification of sinners, or, which is the same thing, pardoning sin, and making a free gift of eternal life in Christ, as if it gave an encouragement to sin, and weakened the obligations to holiness. The Apostle gave the true answer, That the thing was impossible: "They could not continue in sin, because they were dead to it;" dead and buried with Christ to a present world, and a present life; and consequently dead to all the temptations to sin, but alive unto God by Jesus Christ; insomuch that the Apostle John scruples not to say, that "they cannot sin, because they are born of God, and the seed of God abideth in them." And surely they that live in the Spirit, must walk in the Spirit, or as they are led by the Spirit. Memorable are the words of the Apostle John: "He that saith he abideth in Christ, ought himself also so to walk even as he walked." And by the same rule, he that really abides in Christ, will certainly do so: for whosoever hath this hope

hope in him, the hope of being made like unto Christ, cannot but purify himself, even as he is pure. The love of Christ constrains him; and that is a constraint incomparably more effectual than all the laws and sanctions man could ever devise. Nay, without this constraint, all the motives and arguments from any other topics will go for nothing whenever a temptation comes, as sad experience sufficiently verifies in numberless instances.

C H A P. IX.

Conclusions.

UPON the whole, then, and after the most critical review of the ways of God with man, it must appear, that the revelation of Jesus Christ is the most perfect demonstration of the Apostle's proposition, "That God is love;" and that in the revelation of the love of God to mankind, every fact we have attested in the record, every step that we find the creator has taken, carries in it not only further and further discoveries of his glory, but likewise that he has pitched his glory on this particular

particular point, “ peace and good-will
“ toward men on earth.” How unlike is
this to the dreadful image the father of
lies hath forged, to frighten men away
from him; and which an evil conscience
hath improved into slavish terrors of his
majesty and greatness, purity and holi-
ness, and rigid justice; as if nothing were
to be expected from him but the ven-
geance of a provoked enemy, who, at
best, is so tenacious of his favours, that
nothing can be obtained, but what is in
a manner extorted from him by the com-
plete satisfaction made by Jesus Christ.
Little wonder it should be found very
hard, I may say impossible, to reconcile
the heart of a sinner to such a God.

To effect this reconciliation, the A-
postle tells us, was the great design of the
gospel-record, viz. That “ God was in
“ Christ reconciling the world to himself,
“ not imputing their trespasses unto
“ them.” For this end did God commit
the ministry of reconciliation to certain
persons, chosen for the purpose, to pray
and intreat thoughtless man to be recon-
ciled to him; which was the same thing
as if God himself, and his blessed Son in
person,

person, did thus pray and intreat them. And in very deed there lies the only obstacle in the way of salvation; not that God is unwilling to be reconciled to men, but that they will not be reconciled to him. And the Apostle John gives us the only way in which that can be remedied; the way in which he and his fellow-Christians were reconciled: "We love him," says he, "because he first loved us." And until the love of God is known, and believed, all pains taken to effect a reconciliation will never prevail. God must appear amiable and lovely, otherwise we can never love him; and nothing but his love, and a full belief of it, can make him appear so. And surely we may say, with the best assurance, that there never was, nor can be, another lover who either did or could demonstrate the greatness and sincerity of his love by such authentic proofs and documents.

It is really astonishing, that the grace shown in the first creation, the continued exertions of supporting power, and the provision made for man in the course of what is called common providence, should be so little minded. Nothing but

a secret heart-atheism can account for it, or draw off the heart of a creature from the sense of its dependence, its absolute dependence, on the free and sovereign grace of the creator. He has taken the most effectual measures for asserting the glory of his sovereignty, and reducing his thoughtless creatures to their right creature-state; which is, to live entirely by his grace. In the first man he gave a fair sensible representation of the happiness of mankind in that way. By fixing the state of mankind as it now is, he reduced them to a sensible necessity, of either perishing, or of owing all to sovereign grace; and he has set that in such an alluring light, that none can perceive it, without acknowledging the happiness of those who are admitted to live in this way. Baalam's wish is a very common one.

But when the great sovereign of heaven and earth condescended to unite himself to us, as he has done in the person of Jesus Christ, it was much, and infinitely more, than could be expected, that he should publish an act of grace, forgiving iniquities, transgressions, and sins. But when to this act of grace he hath

hath superadded a grant of eternal life, and actually lodged it in the hands of his Son, where he knew it must be safe; and when he spared not even him, but sent him into the world to lay down the life he had taken up among Adam's children; that the same sacrifice by which sin was condemned in his flesh, might carry in it the strongest assurance God could give of pardon and life; what shall we say of such a sacrifice? was it designed to reconcile God to man, or to testify the truth and greatness of his love to them?

And yet the way he has chosen to convey the benefit of this grant, carries it yet further. It was much that sinners should be justified freely by his grace, from all things from which they could never have been justified, either by the law of Moses, or any other law that could be imagined; especially when a perfect right to life was made out for them, without any pain or labour of theirs: but, as if that had been a small matter, and below the dignity of his love, he has chosen to make the conveyance by an act of adoption, investing them not only with the rank and dignity, but with all the rights and privileges of sons

and heirs. This was such an effort of love, that the Apostle John, with all his skill in language, could not find a word to express it by: he therefore only appeals to the effect of it, and says, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God."

But neither doth the love of God stop here: As it was singular in its nature, it was fit it should be so in all its effects and issues. Because man can adopt and bring in a stranger to be heir to his petty inheritance, he would do what no man, what no creature could do: He would not only give the title and the rights of sons, but would make them really so; which he has done in the most effectual manner, by giving the Spirit of his Son to dwell and abide in them for ever, and to form their hearts into the spirit and temper of beloved children, to cry, "Abba, Father." And because he knows their childish folly, how easily they are imposed on and misled, he has put them under the care of one who is every way his perfect image, but especially in the tenderness of love, kindness, and compassion, viz. his own blessed

bleſſed Son; and of that Spirit he has given to dwell and abide in them, with all the mighty power of God: ſo that it is utterly impoſſible for all the power of men and devils to pluck them out of his hand.

What pity is it, that all this love, ſo wonderful in itſelf, ſhould be loſt? and loſt it will be to us, as if it had never been, unleſs it is known, and believed.

And hence faith^x comes to be the firſt duty, and the foundation on which the whole of duty ſtands. Where this is, all the commandments of God appear not only not grievous, but eaſy, pleaſant, and delightful: for indeed they are all of them[Ⓟ] dictated by perfect diſinterreſted love, purely for the benefit and advantage of thoſe to whom they are given. But where the love of God is not known, and firmly believed, they are not only grievous, but indeed impoſſible to be obeyed. The Apoſtle John lets us into the ſecret of this ſeeming paradox. So long as the love of the world rules in the heart, the ways of God muſt be inſupportable; and nothing can turn out the love of the world, but the love of God ſhed abroad in the heart.

This is the proper buſineſs of faith; and

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thus it is the victory which overcomes the world.

When one has said, that the faith or believing so much spoken of in the record, and which bears such weight in the Christian life, is the very same which is so well known in common life, he has said all that can be said for clearing the nature of it. The meanest peasant knows better what it is to believe, than the most learned philosopher can define it. It can be known only by experience. It is an inward sense, which none can know any thing of, but they who feel it; and never was any man at a loss to know when he believed, and when not, unless he had been somehow carried out of the plain natural road, and made to imagine that faith is something he knows not what, nor how it is to be performed.

What the Christian is called to believe? is another question, and a very proper one. And the answer is obvious: It is the record of God; or, what we were just now observing, is in a special manner the result of the whole, viz. "That God is love," or the love that God hath to us. This gives occasion to another very proper
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question, How do we, or how shall we know that? And the answer is as obvious: By the evidences he has given of his love in the facts we have recorded, and by his ways with mankind there set before us; the very same way by which we know and believe the love which men have to us. I have marked out the principal ones, the great lines, so to speak: but there are a great number of subordinate ones, viz. his ways with particular men in particular cases; which some call trifling, and below the dignity of history. But the record is not made to give a history of men, or of the affairs of this world; but to reveal the creator of it, and to lead us into such views of him as may reconcile us to him, and endear him to us.

And therefore it must be observed, that the facts recorded there are not matters of pure speculation, for the improvement of our minds, but benefactions and promises, which demand suitable acknowledgements for the benefits already received, and dependence on the promiser's faithfulness for what is further promised. This is well known among men by the terms of *trusting* and *depending* on one another's word.

word. And to talk of believing a promise which does not imply this, is really talking contradictions; and to say we believe the promise perfectly, while we entertain any doubt or wavering about the performance of it, is very little better. Just so much full assurance as there is of the truth and faithfulness of the promise, so much assured confidence will there be in God; and so much as there is of this confidence, so much faith, and no more. So that there can hardly be a grosser mistake than what many indulge themselves in, That their want of assurance is their unhappiness, but not their sin. Just so much of doubting as there is mixed with faith, so much is there of unbelief; and in proportion to that, so much there is of suspicion and jealousy, that God may be a liar, or at least that his faithfulness may fail, which is nearly allied to it.

It is further to be observed, that whatever indignities of this kind are offered to the God of truth, they always in the end recoil upon ourselves. Whatever jealousies, fears, and misgivings of heart, are suffered to mix with our faith, they so far weaken our knowledge and belief of the
love

love of God to us; and consequently so far break the force of the impressions it would otherwise make upon our hearts, and deaden our acknowledgements and returns of love to him, which it is in the very nature and intention of faith to make so deep and strong, as to form the heart; that is, the inward sentiments and feeling of the soul upon it; to plant the love of God there, and to make it the ruling principle, which, according to the measure of its perfection and strength, forms all the affections and passions, and, of course, the whole conversation, into a conformity and suitableness unto the gospel of Christ.

And thus it is that faith becomes the victory which overcometh the world, as it discovers the vanity and emptiness of it, which can never be fully perceived, but in the light of the glory of God shining in the face of Jesus Christ. The love of God, and the love of the world, can by no means stand together in the same heart, any more than one man can serve two masters. And even in this light, love may justly be said to be the fulfilling of the whole law, as it effectually destroys the
root

root from which all sin springs, and breaks the force of every temptation, which are all taken from a present world; and particularly all those separate interests which make men hateful to, and hating one another, and are the fund and fuel of all the evil and mischief which is or can be in the world. Where the love of God rules in the heart, it natively extends itself to every person and thing that has any relation to him. The man must, if he acts in character, walk in love, as Christ also loved us, and gave himself for us. And on this it is that the commandment of loving and blessing our enemies is most strongly founded.

But there is another light in which it is yet more directly the fulfilling of the law, viz. That all the duties we owe, to God, to the Father, the Son, or the Spirit, are included in it; for the duties to each of them are as distinct as they are from one another. In short, whatever duties we owe either to God or our neighbour, are no more but the native actings and exercises of love; which, where-ever it is in sincerity, would certainly exert itself in that precise manner

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which the commandments of God direct and bind us to.

And thus we may see what reason the Apostle had to say, that "in Christ Jesus" "neither circumcision avails any thing, "nor uncircumcision; but faith, which "works by love." Faith leads the way; and by taking in the views we have given us of the love of God in Christ, first works love, and then works by it. These two make up the sum-total of the Christian life. And, which is very remarkable, neither of them is in our own power. We can neither believe, nor disbelieve, what we will, or when we will, but as the evidence constrains us to the one or the other. And as little can we love or hate, but as the object appears amiable, or otherwise. The Apostle states the Christian life as it is: "We all with open face, be- "holding as in a glass the glory of the "Lord, are changed into the same image, "from glory to glory, even as by the "Spirit of the Lord." If any shall ask, how we come by the sight of this glory? our Lord tells us, it is by the manifestation he makes of himself; and that he does it in a way which the world neither

do nor can perceive: " God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shines into the heart, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." And, upon the whole, the life which the right Christian lives in the flesh, is by the faith of the Son of God, who loved him, and gave himself for him.

The Christian's life lies wholly in Christ; it is by faith in him that he lives: and thence it is that he sets forth himself so warmly to the Jews at Capernaum, as the bread of life, the proper food and nourishment of the spiritual life, and the only way in which a Christian can live. It is the way, the only way, which God has appointed; and therefore the only way which he will bless. To attempt to live in any other manner, (as many such are made), is really to attempt to live whether God will or not. All the life, and all the powers of life, that God ever designed for any of mankind, are lodged in his Son's hand; and thence the Christian must have his daily portion and supply. It is not in any natural or acquired perfection, nor even in any or all the gifts of grace they have

have received, or may receive, that his strength lies; but in the grace that is in Christ Jesus: and however weak and insufficient he is in himself for any thing, he can do all things through Christ strengthening him. ✓

This grand truth the Apostle Paul was taught by our Lord himself on a particular occasion: "My grace," said he, "is sufficient for thee;" which produced what appears a great paradox in principle, That "when he was weak, then he was strong;" and another as great in practice, to glory or boast of his weaknesses and infirmities: but both founded in solid wisdom; because Christ's strength is perfected in weakness; and thence arises his glory. And thence this gives rise to another seeming paradox of the same kind, viz. That to a right Christian no duty is either more easy or more difficult than another. As he is in himself, and by the state of his own powers, he is no match for the easiest duty; for our Lord has said, "Without me ye can do nothing:" but to the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and the strength derived from him, all duties are equally easy.

I conclude with just observing, That where the foundations are thus laid in Christ, and the soul rooted in him by faith and love, there needs to be little anxiety about being built up in him in all the exercises of holiness and good works. The man that abides in him, he himself hath assured us, shall bear much fruit. The great deceiver knows this well; and therefore his main attempts have ever been made to draw off the Christian from his strength, and then he is sure to have him at his will. If the Christian is wise, his attention will be constantly fixed on this capital point, on which all depends. The Apostle John's direction was dictated by the truest wisdom: "And now, little children, abide in him; that when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming."

The

The CHRISTIAN LIFE;

OR,

DISSERTATIONS ON Galatians ii. 20.

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

INTRODUCTION.

IT is with peculiar significancy that the kingdom of our Lord, and the things pertaining to it, are so often called a *mystery* by Christ and his apostles; not indeed in the sense which some have affixed to that word, as if a mystery were a thing altogether unintelligible; but as denoting something so secret and hidden, that the men of the world, the wisest not excepted, know not what to make of it: and the propriety of the expression, when applied to the gospel in this its genuine meaning, is too fully illustrated, by the treatment which

which the gospel hath met with in the world. How generally has it been rejected, not only by the ignorant bigotted vulgar, but even by those who have been reckoned the most learned and wise? And among those who profess their belief of the gospel in general, how few receive it, until they have moulded it into a suitableness unto their own preconceived notions and apprehensions? Whence has arisen that multitude of sects and parties, each of them having a peculiar scheme of Christianity, which yet they all pretend to found upon the same authority.

There is indeed a mystery in the kingdom of heaven, and the whole conduct of it. It is itself a secret of such a nature, that the wisdom of man, improved to the highest possible pitch, could never have discovered it: and when it is brought to light, as it is in the gospel, it continues a secret in a great measure to all that know it only by report and hearsay. Christ's kingdom is not of this world: it belongs to another, a spiritual and invisible one, which can never be brought under sensible observation; the inhabitants whereof are all of the same nature. The souls of men
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are the only part of them capable of any correspondence with that spiritual world: and buried as these at present are in flesh, strongly connected with this material world, and formed upon the state and appearance of things here, they are extremely unfit for it in all respects.

It is this which makes the accounts of that world, and the way of living which belongs to it, even when conceived in the most proper and expressive terms, appear a mystery, a perfect riddle, to the inhabitants of this earth; as they can affix no meaning to these terms, until they have adjusted them to their conceptions, as metaphors and bold figures; by which means, they all may be, and often have been, explained away, not only into another meaning, but one directly contrary to the plain import of the words. And to give a colour to this shameful licence, we are told strange stories of the extravagancies of the eastern languages, as so overrun with hyperbolical affectations, that nothing can be made of them, until they are brought down to common sense and plain expression: Language, one should think, not very respectful to the divine wisdom,

wisdom, which, we may say without offence, knew as well how to adjust expression to the matter, as the most sedate and sagacious of our modern philosophers.

In the account the Apostle Paul here gives of himself to the Galatians, where he intends to set before them a state of the Christian life, we have one of the most eminent instances of that mysterious way of speaking. That Apostle, we are sure, was able to speak as intelligibly as any man ever was; and in ordinary cases, evidently did so. Nay, he values himself upon it; and even boasts of his using great plainness of speech in these things, and suiting the expression to the subject in hand; and was ^{thought} of God to do it with such exactness, that he asserts with great boldness, That if his gospel was hid to any, it was a sure sign that the god of this world had blinded their minds to their eternal perdition, 2 Cor. iii. 12.; iv. 1. 2. 3. And yet in this one verse he has no fewer than three expressions of this kind, the strongest that are any where to be found in the Bible; such only excepted as are used to the same purpose, and perfectly of a piece with them, by this and the

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the other apostles, and by our Lord himself before them, viz. That *he was crucified with Christ, and yet lived*; that though *he lived, it was not he that lived, but Christ in him*; and though *he lived in the flesh* to all appearance as other men do, yet in truth he lived a quite different life, *by the faith of the Son of God.*

It is not to be denied, that there are many figurative expressions in the sacred writings, which it would be foolish and ridiculous to construe in the sense the words commonly bear, and which the connection and design will by no means admit: but besides that this is not the case here, there are two things that persuade me, that the Apostle is giving a plain and undisguised account of the thing as it is, without any figure at all, except what the nature of his subject necessarily required, (as human language has no words to express it by but such as are taken from the present state of things, and these so adjusted, as any man of the plainest sense may be brought to understand them), viz. That it is part of an epistle written to plain men upon a very momentous subject; and that where-ever the same subject is spoken

of, either by our Lord or his apostles, the same, or equivalent terms, are constantly made use of; insomuch that the whole New-Testament language is founded there-upon.

It stands in an *epistle*; and that is allowed to be the plainest and most simple way of writing. This epistle was addressed, not to some one or more very learned men, who might be supposed to understand the subject so well, that the boldest hyperboles would direct, and could not mislead them; but to a body of very plain men, as appears by the foolish mistakes they were led into, which required yet greater plainness: and it stands as the introduction to his epistle, upon which he founds the whole of what he had to say to them, which required the greatest clearness and distinct plainness that could be. The case was this: Some bastard Christians, Jews, who, on some view or other, had taken up that profession, set up for teachers, and subverted the whole constitution of grace. For thus they taught, that notwithstanding all that Christ had done, and engaged to do, unless a man was circumcised after the manner of Moses,

Moses, he could not be saved. The Apostle, who had planted the doctrine of Christ among them, after a short account of the truly miraculous manner in which he received his instructions immediately from God, without any concurrence of human teaching, and how honestly he had stood by them, when Peter dissembled, and Barnabas was likewise carried away with his dissimulation, he lays before them a state of the Christian life as he found it in himself, and knew it to be by experience, viz. That neither Jews nor Gentiles could be saved by the observation of the law, which the false teachers insisted so much upon; but both were obliged to have recourse to the grace that is in Christ: That this is so far from giving any encouragement to sin, or loosening any of the obligations to holiness, that it is just the reverse. One must be dead to the law before he can live unto God. This he asserts from his own experience, ver. 19. “ I through the law am dead to the “ law;” which was so far from being contrary to the law, that it was the very nature and intention of the law, to bind the man under death who was subject to

it: On which account it is elsewhere called, *the ministration of death*: A course which we are well assured all Christians must pass through, and which the Apostle felt in himself, being through the law, or by its ministration, brought to death: in consequence whereof, he was dead to the law; the law had done its utmost, and he had no more either to hope or fear from it. See Rom. vi. 13.; vii. 1. 2. 3. &c. And because it might be doubted, how he could be slain by the law, and dead to it, while he was really alive, he explains the mystery of it in the words before us, That he was crucified with Christ, and yet lived; or rather, as the truth is, Christ lived in him; and though he lived in the flesh, yet he lived not after the flesh, but by the faith of the Son of God. And who will believe that such a man as Paul would lay down a metaphor, and so extravagant a metaphor too, as this is by some supposed to be, to build a course of reasoning upon in so serious a case? This would not be reasoning, but a train of foolish and trifling puerilities, which no man of common sense could fall into: and yet he assumes, upon the evidence, with the utmost

most confidence, that it was such a degree of folly to think otherwise, that nothing but fascination or witchcraft could have led the Galatians into it, ch. iii. 1.

But this is not the single place where he expresses himself in this manner: his epistles are full of it; and indeed the whole of his reasoning on every occasion either expresses or supposes it; so that, to do justice to the argument, one would be obliged to run over in a manner all that he has written. We must content ourselves with mentioning such as are most expressly to the purpose. In his epistle to the Romans, he not only talks the same language, but repeats, opens, and explains it at large; especially in the 6th, 7th, and 8th chapters; where he assures us in plain terms, that every Christian is dead to sin, baptized into the death of Christ, and in his baptism is buried into death with him; that his old man is crucified with Christ, and he planted into a likeness or conformity unto his death; whence, of course, he comes likewise to be made conformable unto his resurrection, and lives and walks in newness, not of conduct only, but of life also; this
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life that he hath by the Spirit of Christ dwelling in him, being freed from the law, and become his. This he there speaks of as a thing well known among Christians; and takes it for granted, in his epistle to the Colossians, that they are dead, and risen with Christ. See ch. ii. 20.; iii. 1.—3. And again, writing to the Philip-
pians, he proposes it as his highest aim, “to
“ know Christ, and the power of his re-
“ surrection, and the fellowship of his
“ sufferings, being made conformable unto
“ him in his death;” and thence draws proper conclusions for distinguishing the Christian from counterfeits, and pressing such duties as naturally follow on such a state of things. See Rom. viii. 9. 10. 13.; vi. 1. 11.; Gal. v. 24.; vi. 14.; Col. iii. 5. 9. &c.

Neither is the Apostle Paul singular in these ways of speaking: he learned them from our blessed Lord himself, and his manner of opening the business for which he came into the world; where we find him setting himself forth, on all occasions, as the “light and life of the world,” “the bread,” i. e. the proper support of life, “the resurrection,” &c. And whoso-
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ever will be at pains to compare these and such other expressions made use of by him, with what he has laid down in the most peremptory and solemn manner, as the only way whereby any man can become a disciple of his, viz. "denying himself, taking up his cross, and following him," and the practice of the primitive Christians, in compliance therewith, together with the Old-Testament facts referred to by him and his apostles, will there find a very fair key to this seeming riddle in my text; by which it will appear perfectly plain and easy, the very truth, as it is in Jesus, and as it was from the beginning.

It may not therefore be amiss, before we enter upon the particular consideration of the state the Apostle here gives us of the Christian life, to take some general view of those facts upon which he founds his description, the several kinds of life and death, and the several stations and conditions, which mankind have been, or may be in, with respect to the one or the other of them.

There is nothing men commonly reckon themselves better acquainted with
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than what we call *life* and *death*; and yet there is nothing we know less about in reality. Death, we have hardly any other notion of, than that it puts an end to life, and the activity and powers of the living creature, except what we have annexed to it from the imperfect observations we make on the dissolution of the bodily fabric in animals and men. But what life is, and wherein it consists, is all a mystery. Something we know of its effects, of what we call living, and that only by the observations we make on that very imperfect life which we, or the creatures about us, enjoy. But how superior beings, exempted from matter, or even from such gross bodies as ours, do live, we can judge no better than one born deaf and blind can do of sounds or colours, and as palpably betray our ignorance when we attempt to guess at it. But as that is no argument against the truth of the thing, and the real existence of beings possessed of powers which we have no knowledge of, there may be as many different kinds of lives as there are different kinds and degrees of vital powers and activity, or as these may be differently modified and varied. Thus,

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so far as our observations go, we find something we call life in vegetables, animals, and men; but all of very different kinds. We see it is so by the different effects: but still *life* itself, that which makes them live, lies quite out of sight. It is in the hand of God the great creator. He only has life in himself. It is his property, and no creature can have it but by his gift.

As no creature has life in itself, or any property in its being; so the most perfect of the creatures have nothing in themselves to support and maintain them in the possession of it. Their sustenance lies all without them, and thence must be gathered in. This is what we perceive very plainly in our own, and all the several kinds of life which fall within our observation. We cannot subsist a moment without air to breathe in; and but a very little time without food; and very uncomfortably without light and heat, and the conveniencies of life. And the more noble and excellent the things are which the creature subsists on, and finds his pleasure in, the more excellent the creature itself is very justly reckoned. It is this

which distinguishes men from brutes, and the several classes and species of both from one another. And if there were (as we have good reason to think there are) beings which can subsist directly and immediately on God, and can find their pleasure and happiness in him, without any dependence at all on their fellow-creatures, these, it must be allowed, are the most noble of all, and may subsist and enjoy themselves perfectly, though the whole universe besides were sunk into nothing.

There is another difference we find among creatures, which serves to distinguish them one from another, viz. that some of them are perfect in their kind when they come first from their creator's hand, and admit of no further improvement; though perhaps they may be capable of addition or abatement in actual enjoyment: others there are, which, even to our observation, grow up from small and very low beginnings, through several intermediate stages, to their last and most perfect state; which is so different from the first, that no body would have thought it the same being, had not they themselves been

been witnesses to the several changes. Thus it is with plants, animals, and insects most remarkably. It is so likewise with men: and who could have said, had we not been taught it by infallible authority, where the standard of human perfection was to be found? what different stations we have to pass through ere we arrive at it? and whether this which we are so fond of, is not indeed our embryo state, out of which we are to emerge into one entirely of another kind? nay, and whether we may not rise up to that most perfect state we spoke of, to live directly on God? These things are altogether in the hand of God; and no man can say they will or will not be, until God reveal his mind, and declare what he designs them to be.

God, the great sovereign, might, had he so pleased, have peopled the world at once: He could, with the same ease, have furnished the world with plants and animals, which should last as long as the world stood; or renewed the face of the earth, and produced the several generations of men and beasts, as he did at the first creation. But he has (and we are

sure for wise reasons, whether we perceive them or not) thought fit to propagate them in the method we see done, every species of them by their proper seed. Particularly he has chosen to make of one blood all the families of the earth, and from one pair to bring all the individuals he ever designed into being. This makes another difference among created beings, viz. such as receive their vital powers immediately from their creator's hand; and those who have them by the intervention of others, as so many channels, or means of conveyance of life, with all the powers belonging to it. This last is as evidently an exertion of creating power, as the making a human body out of the dust of the earth; and is rather a fairer display of the power and contrivance of the great creator. This is what we call *the course of nature*; but it must never be forgot, that it is the *divine constitution*, appointing things to be as they are, that makes *nature*: and the powers of nature are but the power of God, making his constitutions effectual.

It is further to be observed, that had it pleased God to make man just such a creature as he now is, and to put him precisely

cisely into the same circumstances in which at present we find him : had this been the fixed order, and what we call *the law of creation*, that man should be thus born, and grow up by degrees, with the same measures and kind of vital powers, and the same prospect and means of external life ; it could never have entered into any one's head to find fault with it, or absolutely to say, as the clay to the potter, " Why hast thou made me thus ? " And this will hold, though there had been no prospect beyond the grave. This, however, is the state in which mankind are found. And whatever way God was pleased to take for bringing us there, whether directly by creation, or by the fall of our first parents, alters not the case. If it would have been no injustice to us to create us in no better state, it surely can be none to suffer us to fall into it.

But there are many things which, even in our present very imperfect views, make it an instance at once of superlative wisdom and goodness to us, that our first father was created in a higher and better state. One among many deserves our attention. It is notorious how fond men naturally

naturally are of a present world, and how hard it is to draw them off from their attachment to it, even after all that our gracious God has held forth to engage their attention and affections to spiritual and eternal things. These are all unseen, and indeed such as it is not only very hard, but even impossible, to form any notion, or proper conception of them, until they are either illustrated by sensible documents, or the mind prepared by some sensible image or analogous representation. The paradisiacal state of our first parents answers all these purposes. It is an historical representation of the happiness of a man in friendship with his creator: and the state of things there was so much preferable to the present, as makes us naturally regret the forfeiture, and wish to be restored to the possession of it. It affords, moreover, to all ages and generations of men, a sensible document of three things, which we want much to be instructed in, viz. the unhappy consequences which necessarily attend disobedience to the divine constitution and order;—the unhappy and dangerous situation the most perfect man would be in, were his life and happiness
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put upon his own good behaviour ; — and further, That the man who will not be content to live by the mere grace of his creator, must certainly perish. Thus, by one man, the most perfect and best instructed man that ever was, sin entered into the world, and death by sin: A merciful warning to his posterity, never to attempt any other way of living than their creator and sovereign proprietor has allotted them.

But the main and principal design of putting our first father in the circumstances we find him, was, we are assured, to exhibit in him a real and sensible figure of *him* who was to come; the person whom God had chosen to set at the head of the new creation, as Adam was at the head of the first; the author and fountain of eternal life to all that should ever have any share in it. We have the parallel finely drawn by the Apostle, Rom. v. and 1 Cor. xv. 45. to 50. The sum of it is, that the *first man* created as he was out of this earth, stood at the head of all the succeeding generations of earthly men; and was the only man who had access to stand before God, to receive life, and the terms of life, for himself and his seed, and to convey the
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same to his descendents in the course of natural generation: *He* failed in the performance of the terms, and judgement was accordingly given, fixing the state and condition of mankind so long as the world stands. The *second man*, who is the Lord from heaven, God and man united in the person of Jesus by an indissoluble and essential union, was the only one of the sons of Adam who could stand before God, as the head of the new creation, with respect to the spiritual and eternal state of mankind, to receive and fulfil the terms of life for them:

He accordingly performed the terms, and had given unto him the distinguishing privilege, of having life in himself; and thence he is become "the resurrection and "the life" to all his seed, quickening their souls in time by his Spirit, and raising their bodies at the last day, when the final judgement shall be pronounced, determining and fixing their eternal state; so as neither sin nor death shall ever enter into that perfect and happy station.

And thus we have before us those very different stations, which all the children of Adam must successively pass through, who are so happy as to share in the glories
of

of the eternal state; and three very different lives, and ways of living, answering these stations. 1. The natural state, in which the judgement given on our first parents fixes all their posterity, and the life which all their posterity derive from them. 2. The state which Christians, men in Christ, are raised to in a present world, by his Spirit quickening their spirits, and that divine life they are made sharers of when they are again admitted members of the spiritual world. And, 3. The state they enter upon at the resurrection, when they shall be admitted to bear the perfect image of their head. There was a representation, a sort of image of all these, in the state of the first man. There can be no doubt of his being possessed of the life he conveyed to his posterity; and as little of his being a member of the spiritual world, when he conversed freely with his creator. And his paradisiacal state was as fair an image of the eternal one, as could be exhibited in sensible things; and is accordingly used through the divine writings as an emblem thereof.

But it was only a little time that man

continued there. How long, is an improper inquiry ; as it is impossible for us to know, and could answer no manner of purpose if it was known. That was not the station God designed for man : he had infinitely higher views for him ; and had from eternity set up another kind of standard of human perfection and happiness in his blessed Son. So that, in truth, his loss was so far from being matter of regret, either to himself or his posterity, that it was incomparably better for both, than if, by his standing, he and all his posterity had been confined to that low state. But however that may be, by the fall of our first parents, and the judgement given upon it, the state of mankind was fixed. Death was entailed on them, and all that ever should derive life from them ; and they were left in the same condition into which at present we either do or may feel ourselves sunk ; cut off from all acquaintance and commerce with the spiritual world, and no way of access left until it is restored in Christ ; confined to the creature, and condemned to pick up such a pitiful subsistence as this world can afford us ; which yet pleaseth

feth us perfectly : A most convincing evidence that we are fit for nothing else.

We should have been, perhaps, for ever at a loss whence this incapacity proceeded, and have made, as many have done, a great many silly guesses about it, had it not been for the way in which we find it cured, and the spiritual life restored, viz. The gift that is made of the Holy Spirit, as a new inward vital principle, and the spring of all spiritual powers. This marks the distinguishing character of this kind of life; and will be found the only way whereby God communicates himself, and manifests his glory; and we may say, the only way whereby he can do it to such creatures as we are, in the condition wherein Adam hath left us. And those who feel the effects of the Spirit will soon be convinced, that all the darkness and incapacity we are under of finding any pleasure in God, was owing to the want of it.

And now, if any should ask, as ignorant and foolish men will always be asking impertinent questions, How is it consistent with the justice and goodness of God, to take away his Spirit, and thereby

render a whole species of creatures miserable for the fault of one; whom they had no further concern in, than that God himself had made him their common parent, and set him at their head? the answer is ready, What if God had never given his Spirit, either to him or them, and left them just such animals as they are? What if he had given his Spirit for a time, and taken it away without any fault at all; who durst have said it was wrong? But when we have this Spirit, by a standing constitution, conveyed to all who will receive him; and conveyed in a way, as much preferable to the course of natural generation, as the blessed Son of God is to Adam, and the glories and joys of heaven are preferable to his paradise; how perverse must the spirits of men be, who will find fault with a provision, which brings man as near to God as it is possible a creature, even the highest and most excellent, can be?

In that intermediate station, wherein the Spirit of God abides in the Christian, while yet he continues in the flesh, the body he derived from Adam; we have the two very different lives derived from the

first

first and second man, subsisting in some sort together in the same person. The soul of man, once dead to God and the spiritual and eternal world, buried in sense, and enslaved to all sensual and worldly lusts, cravings, and appetites, now restored to its proper life by Jesus Christ, becomes capable of its proper business, to live as a spirit should do; while yet Adam's life remains in these bodies, and all the base and low appetites and passions belonging to it, never to be rooted out, until these corruptible bodies put on incorruption, and mortality be swallowed up of life. Thus, then, the case stands: By our first birth, as children of Adam, we are born into this world, and good for nothing else; by the Spirit restored in the new birth, we are brought into the spiritual world, and become the children of God by Jesus Christ. But our relation to the first Adam, and our connections with this his world, are never broken, until these bodies return to the dust, from which they were originally taken: and when these shall be raised up, and not till then, the mystery of God will be finished in their perfect union with, and conformity

mity to their glorious head. But just so far as any man comes to be united and alive to Christ, just so far is he disjoined from and dead to Adam.

And as our blessed Redeemer is not only the author of eternal salvation, by fulfilling the terms of life, and thereby loosing the bands of death, nay, the spring, the fountain, and bestower of it; but likewise the pattern to which we must be conformed, so as not only to live as he does, but enter into it the same way also; hence we may see the true sense of our Lord's words, upon which all the rest are founded, "Denying one's self, taking up
"our cross, and following him." I know not how self-denial, and taking up the cross, have been dwindled away into that poor low metaphorical sense in which they are generally taken. Most certainly it is something more than refusing to gratify, or crossing this or the other corrupt appetite, or even such as are not simply unlawful, and bearing the afflictions and distresses that God in his providence sees fit to order in their lot. These are indeed the duties of Christ's disciples: but denying themselves, and taking up the cross, are

are their entrance into that relation. The child of Adam stands, almost in all respects, opposite to the child of God: at least the life of Adam, with all that belongs to it, stands so to the life of Christ. This is indeed the man's very *self*; and nothing can make one a disciple of Christ, but bringing this self to the cross, the instrument of death, renouncing it for ever, as what he must have no more to do with, and chusing to follow Christ, with an absolute dependence on him for all, where-ever he is pleased to lead.

This will, I hope, appear, with abundant evidence, from the consideration of the Apostle's profession here; which, indeed, is no more than a description of his own compliance with these our Lord's terms of discipleship. For,

FIRST, He had perfectly denied himself, and taken up his cross: *I am crucified*, saith he, *with Christ*. Thus he followed him in his death. And being conformed unto him in that first step,

SECONDLY, He followed him in his resurrection. Though he was crucified, yet *he lived*: He was not left in a state of death. It was his old man only that was crucified, and

To deny myself, take up one's cross and follow Christ, is to crucify one's self, namely, —
 this life which we have received of Adam, to die to it in order to live entirely and solely to Christ.
 This death in spirit to the life by Adam is the soul's birth to the spiritual life and which is in
 Christ Jesus.

and the life he had from Adam that was put an end to by his death. He had another life in exchange, and an incomparably better one, the life of Christ, by which he was quickened with him into a new man; which yet he describes so as to give Christ the whole property in it. It was of such a nature, that it was not so much he *that lived*, as Christ *that lived in him*. That is the Christian's life, the life of the new creature.

THIRDLY, He describes his way of living in this new state: *He lived in the flesh*, the *body* he derived from Adam. That he still carried about with him, as all the children of God do until death set them at liberty: but yet he lived not *after* the flesh, as Adam's children do; nor could he in that situation walk by sight, as the glorified shall do in their heavenly state; but, as one who had his heart and all his interests in the unseen world, the *life he lived in the flesh*, was by the faith of the Son of God.—In the

FOURTH and last place, He concludes his account with the distinguishing acting and exercise of true faith in Christ, by applying his love, and the blessed fruits of it, in giving himself for his people, particularly

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to himself: *Who loved me, and gave himself for me.* And if we can but make out any thing of a distinct account of these four particulars, I believe we shall have before us a very fair view of the Christian life, as it subsists in a present world.

DISSERTATION I.

I am crucified with Christ.

WE begin naturally where the Apostle doth, with the only way by which a child of Adam can enter into this life, viz. by being *crucified with Christ.*

And here we must, in the *first* place, carefully examine the import of the Apostle's expression; and then it will be easy to shew, in the *second* place, that this is the only entrance into the Christian life.

I. FIRST, we are to examine the Apostle's expression, and fix the true import and meaning of it.

And this would by no means be a difficult task, from the general observations we have made concerning the several stations, and different lives, which mankind pass through before they attain their state of perfection, were it not for the many

mistakes that have been committed in this fundamental article of Christianity, and the many shifts that have been fallen upon to explain away this and the other scripture-expressions of the same import. I will not stand so much as to take particular notice of them, where there is such endless variety; those worth noticing will fall in our way as we go along: and most of them are founded so far in some part of truth, that the only error lies in not taking in the whole; which yet makes them very dangerous ones, maiming the views that God has given us, by putting a part instead of the whole.

There are three things before us in the account the Apostle gives of himself, which must be well understood before we can pretend to understand it:—the subject he speaks of;—what he asserts concerning it;—and the way in which it is done: *I am crucified with Christ.*

1. That the subject the Apostle here speaks of is himself, cannot be refused; the same man who lived in the flesh by the faith of Jesus Christ. And as it was in this view, as a man in Christ, or one who had Christ living in him, (for these

two are the same in the true Christian language, as they always go together), that he says *he lived*; it must be in the opposite station, as a child of the first Adam, and deriving life from him, that he saith he *was crucified*. As this will hardly be denied by any body, thus generally expressed, especially when it is considered, how frequently, and in what strong terms, we have the same thing asserted of every Christian; and had the life of Adam been entirely destroyed, as it certainly will be at death; and the man raised again, as Jesus Christ was, into the possession of a new life entirely different from that which he had lost, which will be the case when the life of Christ is perfected in them; there could have been no difficulty at all in apprehending his meaning. But how a man living in that flesh he derives from Adam, can be said to be crucified, dead, and buried with Christ; this by many is thought impossible, unless it be in some very improper and figurative sense, viz. that it is not the man, but something about him, that is crucified: not his life, or being in Adam, and as deriving from him; for that they say still continues;

but only his way of living, or his corrupt conversation : so that the expression means no more but dying to sin and living to righteousness ; and therefore the old man, the flesh, and one's self, or the *I* that is said to be *crucified*, can be no more than the former lusts in his ignorance ; or, at most, but the corrupt nature derived from Adam ; which, by a bold figure, the Apostle here personifies, and makes a man of.

This last, the corrupt nature derived from Adam, if it have any meaning at all different from natural corruption, is the very thing we speak of. The life and powers of the man are his very nature, and make him what he is, the child of Adam, or the child of God, as they come either through Adam, or through Christ ; and the whole difficulty arises from the want of distinct apprehensions, both of the one and the other ; especially of the Christian life, as it subsists in this world. It is of a hidden nature, both as it is spiritual, and as it is in a peculiar manner "*hid with Christ in God* ;" hidden absolutely from the men of the world, the wisest and most learned of them ; and in a
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great measure hid from those who live by it. - Hence it is, I am afraid, very commonly imagined, that the life which Christ has to bestow, is no more but the restoring, and lengthening out to eternity, the life which was given to Adam, and by him conveyed to us; the new creature no more but the child of Adam purged from his natural and acquired corruptions and bad tempers; and that all that is spoken of their being "born again," "born of the Spirit," "begotten and born of God," "having the seed of God abiding in them," with many more such high-sounding descriptions, mean no more than a pompous description of a man's turning from sin to righteousness, and from seeking happiness in the creature to find it in the creator. And thence have arisen all those schemes of religion, very falsely called *rational*, which make it so easy a matter, that every one may be a Christian when he pleases.

Mean while it is an agreed point, (and agreed, I believe, only because it is a plain sensible fact which will not bear a dispute), that the bodies we derive from Adam cannot enter into heaven, until they are

are either entirely dissolved, and reduced to their original dust, or so changed, as the Apostle says theirs will be who are alive at the last day. Why might not the whole man, the child of Adam as he is, be continued in the possession of life? No reason can be given but one of two; either that he was not capable of it, until he was changed, refitted, and new created; or that a divine constitution and order stood in his way. All comes to one, which side soever we take; for is not that the same constitution by which it is appointed for all men once to die? and is not that the same with the judgement given on our first parents, on their transgression of the original law, "In the day thou eatest, thou shalt surely die?" Surely it strikes as strongly against the life of the soul as that of the body. It is true we do not see the soul die, as we do the body: and good reason we do not, when we do not see the soul at all, neither know wherein its life or death doth lie. But if we did, we would be able to feel it dead; every man might feel it by his inward sense, as strongly to his conviction, and even more so, than he can perceive a body

body to be dead. Though we know not what life is, yet we certainly know it comes all from God; and that indeed no creature can subsist a moment in life without him, nor in any other station or manner than he has ordained it. Whenever then the soul of man comes to be cut off from the fountain of life, or, which is the same thing, deserts the station and way of living God has allotted, die it must. This is no metaphysical refining: whoever pleases may bring it to the only test of truth, in which all demonstration terminates, the inward sense and feeling of the man. The creature must be concluded dead, when all its vital actions and operations cease: when a spirit can neither perceive, nor relish, nor have any commerce with spiritual objects, nay not so much as with the Father of spirits, where is its life? We have no more to do then, to be fully satisfied whether our spirits are alive or dead, than to try what we can make of God, or the spiritual and eternal world, and what pleasure we can find there. Evidence enough we have that we are alive to this world: but not more than of our being dead to God. The
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very sentence, condemning man to this life, effectually declared him deprived of the other: And as men have lived so long alive to this world, and dead to God, what should hinder them to live alive to God, and dead to the world, in the most proper and native sense ?

2. And this leads us to consider what the Apostle asserts concerning the man thus made spiritually alive in Christ, viz. That he is *crucified*, and *crucified with Christ*. And if we can get to the right understanding of this, it will fully clear what we have said on the other head. And in whatever sense we take it, there are two things evidently included in it.

1st, That we are some how joint partners and partakers with Christ in his cross and crucifixion. And,

2^{dly}, That some how or other we are made conformable unto him in his death and sufferings there.

And both these are so plainly taught in the New Testament, that there is no room left to dispute either of them; nor do I think it was ever disputed, even by those who have in the most notorious manner shuffled Christ out of Christianity.

And

And as he is evidently the principal and chief in both these views, and they who are said to be crucified with him, are no more but accessories, we must, in the first place, consider Jesus Christ as crucified in his own proper person; and this will open our way to the true and distinct apprehension of the others in all the views we can take of them.

This is laid down in the New Testament as the great subject of what is there called *the gospel*; and is strictly and properly so; the glad tidings of the promise made to the fathers, from the foundation of the world, being actually fulfilled unto their children in his person. Thus the Apostles preached him first to the Jews; and thus we find the Apostle Paul declaring he preached him to the Gentiles, 1 Cor. xv. 3.

“ I delivered unto you first of all, that
 “ which I also received, how that Christ
 “ died for our sins, and rose again the
 “ third day, according to the scriptures.”

And indeed the whole scriptures are no more but the record God has ordered to be made concerning his Son; in so much that this great Apostle, who certainly understood his business as well as any man ever

did, was determined to know nothing but “Jesus Christ, and him crucified,” 1 Cor. ii. 2. Nay, he counted all things but loss and dung for the excellency of that knowledge: and particularly in the view we have now before us: “To know him, and “the power of his resurrection, and the “fellowship of his sufferings, being made “conformable unto his death;” Philipp. iii. 10.

And here we have him described to us by the title which he was known and distinguished by among his disciples and followers, but disputed by the unbelieving Jews, *Christ*, or the anointed of God: A title well known in that nation; and by which the promised seed was distinguished from all others, who were either typically or occasionally anointed; if there were any such, either kings, priests, or prophets, who were not, in some view or other, types, or figurative representations of him. This designation, therefore, will lead us into all that is recorded concerning him, either in the Old Testament or New; the promises, prophecies, types, shadows, or images, which preceded his birth; and the whole history of his life, death,

death, resurrection, with all the glory that followed; his person and qualifications; the character which he bore; the trust committed to him; and the place he holds; the execution of that trust, particularly in his death and sufferings on the cross; the intention and effect of it; and the issue and event of all in his kingdom and glory. This, it is easy to see, is a very large field, and would require a long time to survey it but very superficially. It is a study which will fully employ the longest life; and a subject which will never be exhausted through all the ages of eternity. But to let us into the subject before us, it will be necessary to point to those several views of him in which the foundation is laid, both of our conformity to him, and participation with him, in his death. And,

(1) We must consider the person who was crucified; who and what he was: A point that the true knowledge of Christ almost entirely depends on. And this leads us to the consideration of his history; how he was born, how he lived, and how he died. These include the whole history of common men: but as all these were ex-

traordinary in him, they lead us up many ages, to the very beginning of the world ; nay, and if we consider him attentively, we will find him set up from eternity, and that his life and death are but an introduction to his history ; and we shall find him living and reigning for ever and ever, without any end of his dominion. Thus he was spoken of before he made his appearance among men ; and every tittle of it has been fulfilling hitherto, so far as the times are passed ; and we are well assured, that not one tittle of it shall fall to the ground, until all be fulfilled.

His outward appearance, while he was in this world, was, in all respects, like that of other men : he was born, and grew up, and lived for a considerable time without being at all taken notice of ; except by some few who were upon the secret of his birth, and were taught of God to acknowledge him in his early infancy. And even after he entered on his public character, he continued to live in the same low mean way in the world's accounts, despised and rejected of men ; until, at last, after much contempt put upon him by those who were at the head of affairs, the great and the
wise

wise men of the world, he was spitefully and maliciously brought to death as a malefactor; though, in the whole course of his life, he was never found guilty, either of saying or doing a wrong thing.

But it was not in mere innocence that his merit lay: for a course of years in which he appeared publicly, he went about doing good both to the souls and bodies of men; and with such earnest intenseness, that he sacrificed to it his own ease, quiet, and even the necessary supports of life; with such condescension, that he never sent any one away without the errand they came upon; and with such success, that no disease or ailment, either in body or spirit, ever proved too hard for him. With a word he commanded away all manner of diseases and defects; even the devils, and death itself, obeyed his orders, and quitted their prey. As it was a plain case, that no man could do such works as these, unless God was with him, the lowest that could be thought of him, was his being a teacher sent from God. But when his miraculous birth, and yet more miraculous death, came to be compared with his resurrection, and ascension

scension to heaven; and when the divine power he was there possessed of, appeared by the fulfilment of the promise he had made his disciples, of sending the Holy Spirit, this finishing evidence ratified the account he had given of himself; and the highest of his pretensions, to be the Christ, the Son of the living God, which the thoughtless Jews reckoned blasphemy, appeared to be the very truth.

And this carries one's apprehensions of him to a height which no man, at least in our present state of imperfection, can form any tolerable notion of, viz. That he was a person truly divine; not in that low trifling sense in which it has been ignorantly attributed to men, but as one in whom God truly and properly dwells; a man assumed into so near, and even an essential union with the Deity, that he comes to be possessed of all divine power and perfection; to have life in himself, even as the Father hath; and accordingly to be honoured of all as he is: a man who is, in all respects, set at the head of the whole creation of God, with all power in heaven and earth, all judgement, and the very Spirit of God, with all his gifts and fulness

fulness committed unto him. Such was the Jesus who was crucified; never destitute of power to effect what nothing less than divine power could; and yet condescending to sorrows and sufferings, such as the lowest and basest of mankind would not submit to without the utmost necessity. Such an extraordinary person acting in such an extraordinary manner, is the most sensible document that can be given of a design, much above human wisdom to contrive, or human power to effect. And this leads,

(2) To consider him in his public character, the place he holds in the universe, and the purposes he was designed to answer there. And great things we find spoken of his relation to, and influence upon, the whole creation of God; as by him all things were made, and are still upheld by the word of his power, as the chief of the creation of God, and the head of principalities and powers. These dignities and royalties of his deserve our most serious regard, and are a very considerable part of that glory which belongs unto his name. But as he has condescended more immediately to unite himself with the sons of Adam,

Adam, and even to become one of them, it is in this view we have him set forth in the gospel evidently crucified before us, and are therefore in a particular manner interested in him, beyond any other order of beings. And thus it is that we are called in a special manner to consider him.

The title he has assumed upon this occasion, and by which he has chosen to be known among men, the *Messiah*, the *Christ*, the *Anointed*, carries in it a special designation to some office or business, and full authority and power for the discharge of what belongs to it. This we could not have known with any tolerable certainty, had not God led us to it himself by particular institutions, plainly designed to furnish us with an image, whereon we might form our conceptions of it. The anointing certain public persons under the Mosaic law, particularly kings, priests, and prophets, was not only a symbol of investiture; but, especially when done by the immediate order of God, conveyed a *spirit*; that is, all necessary abilities for what they were called to. And yet that anointing was but an image, a sort of outward representation; the oil there being the outward

outward figure and shadow of that Spirit, which dwells without measure in the true Anointed.

The persons appointed by the divine law to be thus anointed with oil, lead us further into the nature of his public character; and are indeed the only words in human language by which it can be expressed; including such as are either naturally, or by peculiar constitution, connected with them. Thus he is represented to us, as the authorised *interpreter* of the divine mind, to reveal to us the knowledge of God, and his counsels and purposes, so far as we have any concern in them; as the great *intercessor* between God and man, by whom all their mutual communion is managed; and the *king* by whom they are in God's name ruled and governed. All these are comprehended under one general name of *Mediator*: not in the confined notion it is commonly used among men, to make peace, and accommodate differences between parties at variance; but in the most extended sense; as it is by him alone that man can have access to stand before God, or receive any thing from him; life, or any of the comforts and enjoyments of it: and all that was shadowed

out under the particular offices of a king, a priest, and a prophet, are but the particular branches of this general character.

All this supposes a special relation to man in his present state, and appears to have been designed for his benefit and advantage, and contrived on purpose to answer all his exigencies and necessities, and to raise him to that state of perfection and glory we have brought under our observation, and set fairly before us, in the person of Jesus. Ruined as we were, as to the happiness of the first creation, by the misconduct of Adam, and rendered incapable of holding possession of the life we derived from him, we must have been held for ever under the power of death, if a proper hand had not been provided to loose the bands of death, and raise up a new creation out of the ruins of the old. It is on this account that Christ bears the character of a Saviour and Redeemer, of which we have many images in the Old-Testament record, in the temporal salvations of the Israelitish nation, and peculiarly in an ordinance instituted on purpose for redeeming persons and inheritances in the land of Canaan; which founds

a great part of the New-Testament language on this subject.

Our great Redeemer was abundantly provided with sufficient power to have effected their deliverance from the depths of the grave, and even from hell itself. But by the event it appears, that “it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.” And from the beginning of the world, we find all communion with God, in any intercourse of friendship, founded in sacrifice, the most direct and significant representation of the death of the Redeemer; and which never could have entered into the wildest imagination but by a divine institution. This has laid the foundation of another part of the New-Testament language, where we have the same Redeemer set before us as the great priest over the house of God, by one sacrifice he made of himself, opening the way into the holiest, the very presence of God, and thence blessing his people in the name of the Lord.

It would make too long a digression from

our present purpose, to enter upon a particular application of these generals. Something will fall in afterwards. We only observe, how, in these, and all the other views comprehended under them, Christ bears the character of a public person, and stands at the head of mankind in the new creation, as Adam did in the old, representing the whole kind; every individual of whom are virtually in him, as all Adam's seed were in him. Thus, we find the perfect intercessor described by the Apostle, Heb. v. 1. 2. 3.; and the character applied to him, viz. "one taken from among men, and ordained for men in things pertaining to God." And when the prophet and the king are likewise taken in, as they are in his person united with the priesthood, we have the fairest representation that can be drawn of him in this view. And thus we are led to conceive of him in a twofold light; as representing his people before God, appearing in his presence for them, and taking care of their interests and concerns in all that they have to do with him, either in relation to their present or eternal state; and representing God to them, acting towards them

them in his name, and making all the blessings of his kingdom effectual to them; and thus he becomes to them the head of the body, deriving down to every member, out of the fulness which is lodged in him, life, eternal life, with all the perfections and powers that belong to it, or which they can ever have occasion for.

(3) This naturally leads us into the nature of his death, with the ends and purposes it was designed to answer; the greatest and most astonishing event the world ever saw. And as it appears by every circumstance to have been entirely his own choice, what he could with the greatest ease have saved himself from, but what himself tells us he had in his view from the time he entered himself among the sons of Adam, it must therefore deserve our utmost attention.

That a man so nearly related to God, united as he was in such a singular manner to the fountain of life, should die, is, if duly considered, the most unlikely thing that ever fell out in the whole compass of the creation of God; so strange, that nothing but the event itself could make one imagine the thing possible. And if he

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chose to lay down his life, (the only case wherein it was possible for him to die), that he should have chosen such a death as that of the cross, a death which none but slaves and the basest of mankind were exposed to; the most shameful, the most painful, and tormenting death, of all that ever were devised; and introduced too with such distressing circumstances, and previous sufferings, such as never another man submitted to; these things could by no means happen by chance, or in the course of ordinary providence; and therefore must argue some very extraordinary intention. The single circumstance of his speedy resurrection is sufficient to assure us of this: that he died only for dying's sake, if we may express it so; and that, by his dying, the great design he had in hand was finished; as himself declared it was, when he gave up his life before nature was exhausted; and he might, if he had so pleased, continued it longer.

There is one singular circumstance attending that kind of death which he chose, that it was the only one which had a *curse* annexed to it by divine institution: "Curse
" fed is every one that hangeth on a tree."

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The nature and import of what bears that name we have, in many instances, declared, in that law where this institution stands; it is no less than the total and irreparable destruction of that person or thing whereon the curse rests. It is a sentence pronounced by the great sovereign of heaven and earth, which can neither admit of repeal or abatement. Such was the original constitution by which all mankind were reduced to the state they are now in; and particularly the necessity they are under of dying, and giving up the life they derive from Adam; so indispensable, that it admits of no hope but in a resurrection from the dead. And such was the case of those sacrifices which were designed for atonements in the typical law; which were but representations of the only way to eternal life and immortality that the present state admits of.

Thus our blessed Lord, the only way to life, and the door by which the sheep can enter, so as to be saved, and find pasture, is represented to our faith as a propitiation for sin, a sacrifice, a ransom, by whom we receive the atonement. All this is evidently Old-Testament language, the way

way of speaking that was in use among the people who were directly under the divine government; and thence we must gather the true intent and meaning of them. There we find two great but different occasions in which they were ordered. The first was when the people were solemnly entered into the divine covenant at Sinai. The second, on occasion of after offences, which either the whole people, or particular persons, might be guilty of. These represented the analogous use of the death and sacrifice of the great high priest over the house of God; 1st, to take us off our first standing under Adam, and enter us into the divine constitution and covenant of grace under Jesus Christ; and, 2^{dly}, to provide for after failures and transgressions in that new state. And thus, as the Israelites were strongly cautioned against imagining, that either the land of Canaan was their natural birth-right; or that they entered upon, and kept the possession of it, by any merit or obedience of theirs; of both which the annual day of atonement was a continued memorial; to say nothing of their passover and daily sacrifices, which, with all
their

their other institutions, answered the same purpose: In like manner are those who hold the eternal inheritance, reminded and assured in the strongest manner, that it is only by the grant of grace, sealed and ratified in the blood of the Redeemer, that they either enter into, or hold the possession of it.

In this light, the whole business of sacrifice, which appeared so extremely ridiculous to the philosophers and wise men of the world, will appear to us the wisest; and at the same time the kindest and most advantageous institution that could possibly have been given to man; as it answered two of the most valuable and momentous purposes they could be concerned in. There was, in the first place, a very solemn acknowledgement of the forfeiture, and an absolute renunciation of all pretensions to life, on any other footing or ground than the free and gracious grant of the creator and great author of life; the only temper that can become a creature, and much more a criminal. And, at the same time, the appointment and acceptance of the sacrifice was the surest

seal of the grant of grace, as it was the strongest and most sensible assurance God could give to man of the sincerity of his intentions, in the promises he had given of pardon and eternal life.

But all these were only shadows, designed for no other purpose, in relation to eternal life, than to lead forward the faith of the worshippers to him who was the truth and substance of them all, and from whom they borrowed all the worth and value that was ever in them. The wisdom and goodness of God were displayed in their utmost perfection in Jesus Christ, at once the most effectual and endearing way of raising mankind to the highest perfection, dignity, and happiness, they were capable of; and in him likewise the highest detestation of sin was shown, in the highest manifestation of love to the person of the sinner. Eternal life is to be had, and entered upon, on no other terms than the destruction of the creature that sinned. Our Lord never intended to screen the children of Adam from the stroke of justice, either by keeping them from dying, or raising them again into the possession of the life they had forfeited. He did,
upon

upon the cross, for himself, and all in whose name he then acted, renounce and give up the life, and all the powers of it, which he and they derived from Adam, into the hands of justice, to be utterly destroyed and put an end to. But he had higher views: he had a life in prospect, by the promise of the Father, in the constitution of grace, as much above Adam's, as heaven is above earth, or God more excellent than the creature. This he betakes himself to, and this accordingly he entered upon at his resurrection; and so do all that are made conformable unto his death, and have fellowship in his sufferings. And

(4) This leads further to observe, the event and issue of his crucifixion and death in his resurrection, and the glory that followed; — which finishes the view, and opens up all the mystery that appeared in his former conduct; how, “for the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame, and has accordingly sat down on the right hand of the throne of God; having all power in heaven and in earth committed into his hand.”

Thus it appears, that in all the conde-

scension he showed, in taking upon him the human nature, and humbling himself even to the death, he was fulfilling the terms of eternal life, and showing that resignation to his heavenly Father's will which became the head of the new creation, recovering a better paradise, by taking upon himself the burden brought upon mankind by the miscarriage of their head in the first; and thus showing himself to be in reality, what Adam was only in figure, the true spring and fountain of life.

It is a very impertinent question that men who reckon themselves very wise are still asking: Might not God have recovered mankind, by making them a free gift of eternal life? Just as wise a question, as if one should ask, Whether he might not have made men angels, and beasts men. We cannot say there is any thing God might not have done, if he had seen fit, except what is inconsistent with his perfections; and of that we are very incompetent judges. We will not therefore pretend to say what he might have done; but this we may safely say, that if he had done otherwise, man would not have been the

the creature he is, but of another kind, And now that God hath chosen to set his Son at the head of mankind, and by him to bring them into the nearest relation to himself, such as no other order of beings, so far as we know, have to boast of, we have all the reason in the world to think it the best and fittest, because he has chosen it; and we are sure it is infinitely better for us than any other way we could imagine would have been, in all the views that can be taken of it: and therefore, as it is the most insolent presumption for the creature to say to the creator, "Why hast thou made me thus?" so it is the most villanous ingratitude, to find fault with him, because he did not leave us in lower or worse circumstances than he has done.

The truth of the matter is, the whole creation in general, and every species and individual, depend entirely on the divine will and constitution; they are what God has been pleased to make them, and higher they cannot go. All the powers of the universe united cannot change a plant to an animal, or a mere brute to a man. It is the first creation-constitution that determines our present state, and makes us descend of
Adam,

Adam, as we do, in the course of natural generation, and makes it impossible for any individual to enter another way. And if this be a divine constitution, that none shall enter the spiritual or eternal world but by Jesus Christ, (and if there be such a person as Christ, there is as certainly such a constitution), what room is there left to ask questions, and put cases, on this more than the other? Surely every imagination of this kind is as properly renouncing God, and attempting to live without him, as ever Adam's aiming to be a God was; and must have the same event; but so much worse than his, as the life we have given and secured to us in Christ, is so incomparably better than that which he forfeited by his disobedience and rebellion; which, in truth, bears no greater proportion to it than a shadow does to the substance. Our Lord Jesus is the person whom God hath chosen, and anointed in the most solemn manner that such a thing could be done; and in the same manner has he declared his decree, appointing him the spring and fountain of eternal life. In him, and in him only, he has declared himself well pleased; so
that

that there neither is, nor can be, any other alternative, but that we either live by him, or perish eternally.

But not to enter any further into so inexhaustible a subject, we may, upon this general view of the death and crucifixion of Christ, be able to form some tolerable notion of the import and meaning of the Apostle's expression, *being crucified with Christ*; and particularly what we proposed next to inquire into,

3, How the Apostle did, and how all true Christians do, share and *partake* with Christ in his death and sufferings, so as they may be said to be *crucified with him*.

That there is such a relation subsisting between Christ, and all who are Christians, as gives them some special interest in him beyond others, and, in consequence of it, some sort of fellowship and communion with him in all his ministrations, and his death in a particular manner, is acknowledged by all who call themselves Christians: and according to the apprehensions they have of that relation, the nearness or remoteness of it, such are also their conceptions of their communion, fellowship, and partaking with him, both in his death
and

and resurrection. I will not enter into any particular detail of the different sentiments upon this momentous subject, any further than they contribute to give some light into the account our Lord himself and his Apostles give of it. And here,

(1) There can be no doubt, that as our Lord's appearance in the world, the whole of his public ministry; and particularly his death and sufferings, were designed for the benefit and advantage of mankind; so they certainly have the benefit of it, and all the good which was designed and effected by it. Those who consider him only as a perfect man, and set before us as an example we are to copy after, consider him in his death as a perfect pattern of patience and resignation, under the most unhappy and cruel treatment one can possibly meet with in the world. Those who consider him as a teacher sent from God, find, in his death and resurrection, the strongest confirmation that can be given to men of his divine mission. Those who conceive of his undertaking, as that of a Redeemer and Saviour to deliver mankind from the destruction brought upon them by Adam's disobedience, find pardon,

don, justification, and a right to eternal life, effected by his perfect fulfilment of that law which Adam failed in. All these benefits Christians indeed have by his death, and many more. But whatever they are, and whatever communion or fellowship they may be supposed to have with Christ in them, this is not to have fellowship with him in his death, but in the fruits and effects of it; and if there is no more, they can never, in any tolerable propriety of speech, be said to be crucified or dead with him. And therefore,

(2) To answer the expressions made use of by the Apostle, it becomes necessary to take the relation higher, that all Christians are in Christ as all mankind were in Adam, as the two heads of the old and new creation, representing their whole respective species, and all that should ever be of them, in the course of the first and second birth: or, which is but an image of the same thing, Christ is to be considered as the great priest-intercessor, representing the whole people, and acting in their name. It is easy to see what a very near interest those who are thus represented have in the person who acts in their name;

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The wisdom of the law of God is, perfect love towards God and towards man. Christ in dying upon the cross fulfilled this law in the most perfect and complete manner possible, for in thus dying, he gave the greatest proof within the power of man to give of his love to God by his obedience to his will even unto so heinous and shameful a death, and he gave the greatest

possible proof of his perfect love to man by thus dying in order to save him from eternal perdition.

how it is their business he is managing as much as his own: and, in our Lord's case, it was in effect their business only; for what had he to do with death and sufferings, and especially such a death as that of the cross? Nay, what had he to do with flesh, but to unite himself to them, to make himself a party with them, and to take their burden and their curse upon himself, to open a way for their deliverance from it, that they might be at liberty to enter upon the possession of that spiritual and eternal life which he has to convey to them? Thus truly and properly they have fellowship with him in his sufferings, and are so far really and truly crucified with him. But,

(3) There is yet a nearer concern that Christians have in the cross of Christ; as he is not only their representative acting in their name, but their sacrifice and atonement: and one great design of that institution was, certainly, to lead mankind into proper apprehensions of their interest in, and connection with him, in his death and sufferings. A sacrifice was properly an image and representation of what man ought to have suffered, transferred, by divine

vine appointment, upon the creature that was offered; and which, by this means, became a ransom for their lives. It is called a *savour of rest*, because God acquiesced and rested in that which was represented there, and at the same time gave rest to the sinner in all respects; as, after the acceptance of the sacrifice, there was no more to give him any trouble. It is hardly possible to imagine a nearer and more interesting connection, excepting only that real union betwixt Christ and believers, by which he lives in them. The sacrifice is really the man himself: it stands in his room; and all his valuable interests, the concerns of life and death, with all the comforts and enjoyments of life, are embarked there. It is eminently so in our Lord's undertaking: in his death and sufferings he stood under their law; he bore the curse of it; and by bearing, removed what should otherwise have bound them under eternal death, without any possibility of release. I only add,

(4) Every true Christian is a partaker with Christ, and has fellowship with him in his death, by acquiescing in, and homologating,

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mologating, approving, and adhering, to what he there did in their name; by which they enter themselves under his cross, and ratify for themselves the renunciation he there made of Adam's life, and all that belongs to it, in the hope of that eternal life, which God hath promised in Christ before the world began. Thus they "are baptized into his death," "buried with him in baptism unto death;" and thus "their old man is crucified with Christ, that the body of sin may be destroyed;" "they become dead to the law;" and to complete the whole, "they are crucified to the world, and the world crucified to them;" that though they live and walk in the flesh, they neither live nor walk after it.

And this leads us to that other view I mentioned, of *being crucified with Christ*, which the Apostle elsewhere expresses by "being made *conformable* unto his death."

Those who imagine, that no more is necessary to make a child of Adam meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light, than merely to have his natural faculties purged from their natural

or

or acquired corruption and defilement; and that grace gives no new powers, but only takes off the adherent lets and impediments from off the old ones; or at most elevates and rouses them to their proper heights of perfection: all these, of course, must construct the old man which is crucified with Christ, to be no more than that body of corruption which is lodged in us; and which they think they are warranted in by the Apostle's calling it *a body of sin and death*. And thus (according to them) to be crucified with Christ, and conformed to his death, is no more than to have our sinful lusts and appetites mortified and destroyed, and to cease from sin as a dead man does; which, in truth, is only a pompous and lofty description of a very common thing, turning from sin to God. So that "crucifying the old man, with his deeds," and "putting off the old man," and "putting on the new man," and "putting on the Lord Jesus," are made to mean no more than ceasing from sin, and practising virtue and holiness.

It is very true that the Apostle, Rom. vi. 11. applies his discourse of the Christian's dying

dying with Christ, in an exhortation which very naturally arises from it, “to reckon
 “themselves dead indeed unto sin, and alive
 “unto God through Jesus Christ.” And no doubt this is a part of the Christian’s conformity to Christ, which he is in the strongest manner bound to; but it is not so properly conformity unto his death, as the native consequences and effects of it. The Apostle had laid the foundation of it deep and strong in the foregoing verses: nor will his way of laying it so much as bear a supposition, that one can be planted into a likeness or conformity unto his resurrection, without being first planted unto the likeness of his death, and then the other naturally follows. And this we can never be said to be, nay nor so much as to ratify and hold good what he did for us, but by doing as he did: not indeed by fastening our bodies to a cross, as his was: that was none of his doing; but what he submitted to, when, according to the determinate counsel of God, he was delivered into the wicked hands of the Jews and Romans: These were the doers of it, and not he; and these we have no

call

call to be conformed to. But whatever he himself did, relating to his crucifixion and death, that we must do likewise, if ever we are planted into a likeness unto him therein. The same sentiments of the justice and goodness of the divine constitution; the same resignation, self-denial, and submission to the divine will, expressed there; the same acknowledgement of the forfeiture, and willing submission to the punishment; renouncing and giving up all connection with the forfeited life, to have no more to do with it in any respect: these, and the circumstances attending them in the death of Christ, deserve our most serious attention; as it will certainly be found one day, that there is no way of entering into eternal life but that one by which he entered, and doing for ourselves what he did in our name.

(1) We must be conformed unto him in the sentiments he had of the divine law; and particularly, the justice and goodness of that original constitution, by which we were brought under the present circumstances we find mankind in, and particularly the inevitable necessity we are under of death. Vain man would be wise, though in,

*John's best gift
to follow Christ
all things*

in truth he is born "like a wild ass's colt." And of all his follies, this is the greatest, that he cannot be reconciled to the station his creator has allotted him in his world. This is a piece of our first father's image: he began the foolish attempt, to make himself wiser and happier than God had designed; and there is hardly any, even the most stupid, of his posterity, who do not flatter themselves, that had they but things at their own disposal, they would provide greatly better for themselves than God has done. Indeed it is no easy matter to be content to be a creature; that is, to live entirely by the grace or free gift of the creator, and to be what he is pleased to make them. Our Lord perfectly knew the present unhappy circumstances of mankind: he knew the worst of it; the law they were under, and the curse which bound them under death. But all this did not hinder him to take part of the same flesh and blood, and to put himself into the very same circumstances; to put himself under the same law, and that very curse, which is the most formidable part of it. This was an honourable testimony given to the justice and goodness of the law,

law, and more for the honour of the law-giver than the spotless obedience of all Adam's race would have been, by how much he was a better judge than they. And until the hearts of men are subdued into the same sentiments, to consent unto the law that it is good, and be perfectly reconciled to it in every part as God has laid it, it is impossible they can have any part with Christ: they never will be reconciled to his death, much less be conformed unto him in it.

(2) Our blessed Lord, in the whole of his conduct, especially where his obedience was put to the severest trial, in his death and sufferings, showed the most perfect self-denial, and the most absolute, resignation to his Father's will. The Apostle gives him this most honourable testimony, "That he pleased not himself:" and it was justified through the whole course of his life. And when the bitter cup was approaching, though he prayed earnestly, that, if possible, it might pass from him; yet he resigns himself entirely to the will of his Father: "Yet not my will, but thine be done."

Every body will readily acknowledge in

words, that God is wiser than man, and infinitely fitter to judge what shall be the condition of his creatures : but where is the man who will abide by it in practice, and implicitly resign himself to the divine disposal ? To be truly persuaded, and honestly acknowledge one's self nothing without God ; though, indeed, it is no more than owning one's self to be his creature ; yet we find in fact is a very uncommon attainment. Men have, I know not how, but very unhappily for themselves, stumbled upon a notion, that God has so imparted to them a certain proportion of being, that they can stand as parties with him ; insist upon terms ; and not only claim wages, but complain of injuries, when they are not treated as they fancy they should be. Our Lord knew, and every Christian knows, that all this is mere imagination ; and though it had been once so, yet life, with all its powers, has been forfeited so often into the hand of the creator, that it is what they have no title or pretensions to retain, whenever he shall see fit to call for it. They can therefore have no expectations nor hopes from it : and therefore ought to follow their

Lord,

Lord, resigning and giving up themselves unto his holy, good, and acceptable will, to be what he shall by his grace be pleased to make them, and to be brought into it in what way he has been pleased to appoint.

(3) Our Lord Jesus, in his death, actually resigned and gave up Adam's life in him into the hands of justice, to be destroyed by that curse which rested upon it; and, in obedience to the will of God, took up his cross, the instrument of death, when the time appointed by him was come. This is but the consequence of the former two; and whosoever hath a mind like Christ's in him, will be sure to follow him in this. A heart reconciled to the law, and resigned to the divine will, must behave like a convicted and self-condemned criminal; justify the law; justify his judge; and willingly meet the stroke of death, which law and justice binds him under, whenever his judge shall please to appoint. Thus the Christian takes up his cross as Christ did; and, as he did, has that death, to which he has devoted Adam's life, always in his eye, as the only thing which can perfectly relieve him from

that unhappy relation, and all the wretched consequences of it.

This is indeed a hard chapter to the children of Adam, and what none of them can possibly bear until they are better taught. And therefore,

(4) This renunciation and resignation must be made upon the same principles of faith, and hope of eternal life, upon which our Lord himself acted. I need not stand to show how our Lord exercised the whole of his self-denial and resignation to the divine will, throughout every period of his life, as well as in his death, upon these principles. He professed always to lay down his life, that he might take it up again; John x. 17. If he was lifted up from the earth, he would draw all men after him; John xii. 32. And he represents his death but as a leaving this world, in order to return to his Father's house. And indeed he had a strong foundation to build upon; the knowledge he had of himself, as coming out from the Father, and his Father's irrevocable promise and grant of the kingdom.

The true Christian has precisely the same foundations to build his faith and hope

hope of eternal life upon, in the views he has of the person of Christ, and the promise of the Father, sealed and ratified in his blood. The Apostle's reasoning is unexceptionably strong: "He that spared
 " not his own Son, but gave him up un-
 " to the death for us all, how shall he
 " not with him also freely give us all
 " things?" In this view, to resign and give up the life, and all the advantages of it, which we now enjoy, is so far from being a hardship, that it is the only wise thing one can do. It is but changing our holding, or rather a precarious trifling possession in a present world, for "an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and
 " which fadeth not away;" such as Adam would gladly have exchanged his primitive paradisiacal state for. It is but renouncing Adam, and this pittance of life we have by him, to hold of Christ, to bear his image, and to share his glory, his honours, his possessions, even his very throne. Rev. iii. 21. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me
 " in my throne, even as I also overcame,
 " and am set down with my Father in
 " his throne." And,

(5) In

(5) In this view it may not be reckoned grievous; to renounce and give up Adam's way of living; with all that belongs unto his world. The Christian, when he first enters upon the cross of Christ, cannot indeed immediately go out of this world, as he did; and therefore, so long as he continues in the body, his conformity to Christ is not, cannot be perfected; something of a connection with Adam and his world still continues. But he reckons himself dead indeed unto sin; he hath crucified the old man, given him to certain death; he makes it his daily business to crucify the flesh, with the affections and lusts, to mortify his members which are on the earth, and to keep under that body where sin lodges; he is crucified to the world, and the world is crucified to him; and accordingly he looks not at the things which are seen, and are temporal; but at those things which are not seen, and are eternal. It is a matter of no moment to him, how the world goes with him, or what men think of him; his conversation is in heaven; he is dead to all below; and his life is hid with Christ in God; and he knows, that
when

when Christ shall appear, then shall he also appear with him in glory.

AND now, if what has been said be duly considered and understood, we shall need little more to assure us of what we next proposed to shew.

II. That the only way a child of Adam can enter upon the Christian life, is by the fellowship of the sufferings of Christ, and conformity unto his death; renouncing, and giving up for ever, the life he derives from Adam, with all that belongs to it.

We have already seen how our blessed Lord laid down the terms of discipleship, without which no man could have any benefit by him, viz. that they must “deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow him.” We have seen likewise how the Apostle Paul himself entered upon the Christian life, in a precise conformity with this established rule, being *crucified with Christ*. And this was no singularity in him beyond others; for “all that are Christ’s, have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts;” and “have put off the old man with his deeds.” “If
“ any

“any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away, and all things are become new.” 2 Cor. v. 17. And is it to be imagined that the way is altered since? It has fared indeed with the gospel as it commonly does with the law; when men find they cannot come up to it, they try to bring it down to them. Since Christianity became the fashionable religion in the world, numbers claim the name who have nothing of the thing: and that their pretensions may have some colour, they persuade themselves, or perhaps only try to make others believe, that Christianity is no such thing as these high expressions seem to import. But however men may amuse themselves, and others, for a time, the thing will stand just as it does.

But it is not merely on the strength of words and phrases that this great truth stands. Take this away, and the whole constitution of grace, the entire frame of the new creation, must either be mere fable and amusement, or at best something altogether superfluous. Christ himself has lived and died to no purpose; or, which is the same thing, for a purpose which might

might have been as well answered without him. If there is no more necessary to enter us into the spiritual and eternal world, and to qualify a child of Adam for the business and enjoyments of that life, than to have our temper and way of thinking altered, and formed into a right taste of moral beauty and goodness, as some are pleased to speak; the child of Adam might have been an heir of glory, had it not been for the unhappy circumstances in which his creator placed him; and he may be so still, if he will only attend to the nature of things, and form himself upon those rules of virtue which are founded there. And thus the gospel is no more but a republication of the law of nature by Christ, the great prophet and teacher sent from God; or at most a new law published by him, by which every one who will, may secure to himself the possession of eternal life. But the whole business of his mediation, as represented in the Old Testament by sacrifices, and other parts of the temple-worship, and the whole of his headship, as represented by the first man, must go for nothing: there is no place left for them.

The doctrine presented by the Christian

But could we perceive what is indeed the nature of things, as they are fixed and established by the great creator; what life is, how it is begun, preserved, and maintained; what a present life is, and what we are who possess it; what prospects and hopes we can justly form to ourselves: if we knew who Christ is, what place and station he holds in the world, and particularly, in relation to us; what that life is which he has in himself, and communicates unto the children of men; with other things which stand connected with these: every view, and every circumstance, would contribute, in its measure, to assure us, that the life we have from Adam, and that which is by Christ, can by no means stand together, but must mutually weaken, and in the end destroy one another. I cannot propose to lay the whole evidence together here; that would require a more perfect knowledge of the mysteries of God than I can pretend to; and the little which lies fairly before us would take up too much room: I shall therefore content myself at present with such as lie most obvious; and more will occur when we come of purpose to discourse on the

the Christian life, as the Apostle describes it in the following part of the verse. And here,

1. The analogy of nature presents us with something more than a presumption, in the daily changes we observe in the lower degrees of life in plants and animals, those especially which we call insects, and the several species of flies which fall every day under our notice. The mother-plant, when it has shed its seed, perishes and dies; the seed, when it begins to root, perishes likewise; and out of its ruins a new plant rises. In that vicissitude the face of the earth has been yearly renewed since the creation. The same is the case of animals, which spend themselves in the production of new ones; and these, from a very low state of life while in embryo, are entered into a new and quite different state when they are brought into the open air, and there grow up to perfection. The little unsightly worm or maggot crawls about for a season, until dying, and perishing to that kind of life, it comes out a beautiful fly, the wonder of the creation. Throughout the whole of nature, the new form destroys the old;

and the creature ceases to be what it formerly was.

This argument has yet the more weight, as we find it made use of by our Lord and his apostles for illustrating the point we are upon. Our Lord tells his hearers, as a good reason for his submitting to death, that “ unless a grain of wheat fall into “ the ground, and die, it abideth alone: “ but dying, brings forth much fruit;” John xii. 24. And the Apostle Paul, by the same image, evinces the difference there is, between the present state of human bodies, and what they shall be at the resurrection. And from the way of animals entering upon a present life, men especially, we have the way of entering into the spiritual and eternal world described, by being begotten and born again of a quite different seed; and therefore into a proportionally different life and being: “ That which is born of the flesh, is flesh; “ and that which is born of the Spirit, is “ spirit,” said our Lord, in his conference with Nicodemus; which indeed is the foundation of the whole New-Testament language on this subject. “ The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against

“gainst the flesh;” and these two are so contrary, that as flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven, the flesh must be destroyed, and the very bodies of believers must be raised up spiritual ones. 1 Cor. xv. 44.

2. This suggests unto us another consideration, the truth of which every man may feel in himself, as the Spirit of God has attested it, viz. That the life of Christ is never perfected in us, until that which we have from Adam is entirely destroyed. What we call *death* completes the rain of a present life, dissolves all our relations and connections with a present world; and the flesh and blood we received in the course of natural generation are no more: nothing remains but that dust out of which man was originally framed. And it is not till these vile bodies are changed, and fashioned like unto our Lord's glorious body, that we enter on the perfect enjoyment of that life, which is indeed begun here in the spiritual life, or the life of faith; but only begun, being at best, while we remain here, a state of infancy and nonage. Thus we have the spiritual life represented in the same terms which distinguish

distinguish the several stages of the natural one. The Lord Jesus is the standard, the measure of the human stature in the spiritual and eternal world, the perfect man; but there are babes in Christ, young men, and fathers; 1 John ii. 12. 13.; weak and strong; and innumerable degrees of strength and stature. But the full perfection is reserved to another world. Why? So long as flesh continues, it will be lusting against the Spirit.

Every man who will be at pains to observe it, may find an image of this in himself, in his very frame and constitution. There are two principles in man, as he is compounded of body and spirit, *Sense*, and *Reason*; and each of these has its different objects; very different indeed when reason arrives at any tolerable strength. These two divide the man so between them, and each exerts its appetites and cravings with such force and vigour, that they are often mistaken for the two very different principles, which the Apostle calls *flesh* and *spirit*, the old and new man. It is notorious how sense sinks, debases, and enslaves reason, and thus destroys its force and vigour. On the other

ther hand, as reason recovers strength, and takes the leading of the man, sense is despised, and all its cravings and solicitations entirely neglected. The man becomes dead to these things. But both sense and reason, in our imperfect views of things, very frequently unite against faith, and would be by much too strong for it, were it not powerfully supported by a superior principle, "the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus:" but so far as the divine life prevails, and the immortal seed of the word of truth grows up to its strength, the man, of course, becomes dead to both, and brings them under proper subjection. And just so far as he comes to be led by the Spirit, that is, so far as he advances in the life of Christ, so far he must become dead to the life of Adam.

3. There is something very observable in the human constitution as it now is, which will go a great way to determine the question. So long as any one is perfectly pleased with his situation, he will never entertain a thought of another; neither will he be prevailed with to alter it, until he be convinced that there is something about it that needs to be amended.

Now

Now Adam's children are perfectly made for a present world; they enter into it, and are insensibly formed upon it, before they are capable of knowing any better: and so long as they are pleased with their present enjoyments, they want no other. If God would but let them alone, and not disturb their enjoyment, they would look no farther. They prefer heaven indeed to hell, because they have heard that this last is a place of torment; but could they have their wish, they would prefer this world to them both.

This is a matter of experience, and what we have instances of before us every day, both in ourselves and others. We can be amused and pleased with what, even in respect of a present world, we certainly know to be the most insignificant trifles; while we cannot be entertained for the shortest time, nay cannot keep from wearying, while we are confined to hear of nothing but God, and how he intends to dispose of us, and the provision he has made for eternity. What can be the language of this? Can it be any other than this; that men are naturally so pleased with this present world, that the most insignificant

significant trifles belonging to it, are reckoned preferable to all that Christ has to give in balance? And so long as they continue of this mind, eternal life lies by neglected, with all that belongs to it. But,

4. So long as Adam's life continues in its strength, unmortified, and unrenounced; that is, so long as men continue strangers to the cross of Christ, as has been explained; it is impossible they can live at all: death stands, by the ordinance of God, entailed upon that life; the *curse* rests on it; and that, as has been observed, never fails to bring the wretched subject it rests upon to utter perdition. The death of Christ has indeed opened a way by which men may be delivered; but even that can only save them, by their forsaking their present standing in Adam, and renouncing for ever that life which is held by so terrible a tenure. Until this is done, it is directly contrary to law that they should live; and it is the stupidest presumption that can enter into the heart of man, to entertain the remotest hope that way. The law stands clear against them; and it is a desperate prospect, which can-

not take place unless God make himself a liar, and set aside his own constitution. The case is too glaring to need any illustration, or indeed to be capable of any: and astonishing it is to think how men avoid the conviction. There is no way of accounting for it but one; and that gives a further evidence of the necessity there is of throwing up this accursed thing. It is this:

5. That all Adam's children are really, and in strictest propriety, in a state of death, and perfectly destitute of spiritual and eternal life. This is, in the very nature of things, a necessary consequence of the former. Our ignorance of what is life, and what is death, deceives us most miserably. As we know no life but that shadow of it which we enjoy in these bodies, we foolishly form our notions of death by what puts an end to that: and upon this foolish bottom stand many of our boasted demonstrations, which have been speciously employed to infer, that spirits cannot die: the great support of infidelity in our times. A creature that cannot perish is an astonishing paradox. We are well assured the contrary is true; that

that every living creature may die, and certainly must whenever the almighty creator withdraws that power which held it in being.

No words can be invented more express than those made use of by the apostles, to express the absolute deadness of mankind in their present natural state, in relation to God, and spiritual and unseen things. Had they said no more, than that "the natural man is dead in trespasses and sins," something might have been pleaded for a figurative meaning: but when we are told in plain terms, that "he neither receives, nor can know the things of God, because they are spiritually discerned;" and when our Lord assures his disciples, "that they could do nothing without him;" that "flesh and blood," all the powers of the natural man, could not discover so much as that he was "the Christ, the Son of the living God;" when he speaks of men every where as destitute of life until he bestow it; what a presumptuous infatuation must it be for men to say, those things are not so; that they have a life already, and need nothing more but to

have it lengthened out to make them immortal?

But this is not a thing of that kind which needs either metaphysical subtilty, or any strained consequences, to support it. It is what every man carries the evidence of in his own bosom, and which the slightest attention cannot but discover, though he had never been told it. Let him but try what he can make of God, or the spiritual unseen world; what conceptions he can form of him, and what he can propose from his hand; how he can live upon him, and find his pleasure in beholding his glory; these are the foundations on which the spiritual life stands, and the most native and necessary exercises of it: and where is the man who can say, that these things are natural to him? as they certainly would be, was he possessed of the life whereof these are the natural actings. Our philosophers indeed boast themselves much in the advantageous circumstances they stand in, with the Bible in their hands; but one of the wisest of their predecessors found himself quite out of his depth, when he was put to say, what God is. Every thing about man, the whole of his

his conduct and behaviour, proclaim him alive indeed to a present world; and his activity in the matters of it give full evidence; but dead as a stone to any thing that relates to the spiritual and eternal worlds. And must not this dead state, and that shadow of life we possess, by which we are so wildly deluded and misled, be renounced, given up, and put an end to, before we can live to God? But,

6. The finishing evidence of this is still behind: It is the absolute inconsistency, and direct opposition; there is between the life we derive from Adam, and that which we have by Jesus Christ. So inconsistent are they, that they cannot possibly stand together; but as much as one of them gains, the other, of necessity, loses, until the one or the other is entirely overpowered and destroyed.

We have already observed much of this on the former heads; in the conflict there is between the two opposite principles of flesh and spirit in the children of God, until the death of the body, the last stroke at Adam's life, sets them at liberty for ever, and enters them into a state of perfection; in the curse that rests upon Adam's life.

life in us, which is directly opposite to the blessing brought in by Christ; and in the spiritual death, in which all Adam's children are buried until they are quickened by Christ. But there are yet other circumstances, by which the opposition and inconsistency will appear yet more glaringly manifest, if indeed any thing can be more so. And,

(1) We may compare them with respect to their intention and design, the several purposes respectively they were designed to answer. And here we need not strain our faculties, by attempting to enter the unapproachable recesses of the divine counsels and designs. What he has revealed is abundantly sufficient for us, especially as it stands supported by plain facts, which fall under every body's observation. The life we have from Adam we are sure was never designed to reach beyond the limits of a present world, nor to qualify and fit us for any thing but what belongs to the inhabitants of it, and to receive what further light and life the creator shall see proper to impart. This is Christ's business to give, to open to us the secrets of the spiritual and eternal worlds, and to furnish

furnish us with life and powers such as are proper for the inhabitants there.

(2) In the rise, and way of conveyance, God is the fountain of life; but communicates it in what measures he sees proper, either immediately and directly, or by such mediums and conveyances as he sees fit and proper. There were only two of mankind received it immediately, viz. the *first* and *second* Adams. The *first* conveys in the course of natural generation; the *second*, by regeneration and the new birth. Under one or other of these heads we must stand; under both we cannot; because,

(3) Of the different and directly opposite tenures by which these different lives are held: the first, by the original law; the second, by the grant and constitution of grace. And though an apostle had not told us, we might have known, that law and grace are absolutely incompatible. The man that puts his life upon the law, renounces grace, and leaves no room for it: and he who chuses to live by grace, renounces his holding by law. If we compare the first Adam's grant, by which all his posterity hold life, with the grant of grace in Christ, the opposition will be yet

yet more evident. The first was limited, and only conditional, suited exactly to its intention; and accordingly carries in it certain death. The second, however it stood on terms to be performed by him who received them, just as the other did; yet these terms being perfectly fulfilled, the grant comes perfectly free and unlimited, and therefore sure and irrevocable, to all that are in him. And in consequence of this,

(4) Their respective ways of living are likewise absolutely inconsistent. And tho' a multitude of circumstances might be brought under this head, I confine myself to two, viz. that all Adam's children are cut off from God, and have nothing to live on but the creature; and that, being still under law, they can deal with God in no other way. By the first, they follow the footsteps of their first father, setting up the creature, in opposition to God, as the subject of their happiness and enjoyment: and by the second, they are obliged to deal with God in a way, which, as matters stand, must certainly issue in death, and their utter destruction.

I need say nothing upon the first, which

is

is the only way a child of Adam can live. God has given the earth unto the children of men : and there they have their portion. The Apostles James and John have determined the opposition. " Know ye not, " that the friendship of this world is en- " mity against God?" Jam. iv. 4. " If " any man love the world, the love of the " Father is not in him; 1 John ii. 15. The Apostle Paul joins his testimony : " The carnal mind is enmity against God;" Rom. viii. 7. And in their circumstances it is simply impossible it can be otherwise. Christ's business is to slay the enmity; and his life, in all the exercises and enjoyments of it, is the love of God.

With respect to the other, as there is a stated opposition between law and grace, the way of living under them must be opposite too. In the one fear, in the other love, are the leading and influencing principles. And perfect love, we know, casts out fear. And as fear has torment, and keeps the poor man in constant bondage, it must stand in direct opposition to that freedom and liberty which is the peculiar privilege of the children of God.

But there is still something worse in

their way of living who are under the law; as it leads them into a way directly inconsistent with that which God has chosen, and with the very design of setting up Christ at the head of the new creation. It leads men off from that way of living which only can become a creature, much more a sinful and a criminal one, viz. the grace and free favour of the Creator and Redeemer; to stand upon terms with the great sovereign of heaven; to recommend themselves unto his favour by their obedience; and thus to seek justification as it were by works of law, and their own doings.

(5) I only add another instance of this opposition, that in a present life, and by the first creation-constitution, man has ~~all~~ his powers in his own hand, and has no hope nor ground to expect any further assistance; and yet he is vain enough to imagine himself very well provided, while, in truth, he is worse provided for answering the great purposes of life than any other being whatsoever. In the new creation, matters stand just in the reverse. The man in Christ feels himself nothing; mere emptiness, and utterly incapable of any thing,

thing, but to receive and take in the provision made for him in Christ. In *him* his life, all his powers, and all the materials of his happiness, so dwell, that indeed it is not the man that lives, but Christ that lives in him; and his whole exercise is to trust him for all, to expect every thing from him, and to love him as he would do his own life if he had any other.

And this points out to us yet another opposition between faith on one side, which is the great and only mean of the Christian life, and sense on the other. I say sense, for that is the sole principle upon which the children of Adam act, because nothing can be brought under their observation but in this way; and all that reason can do, a noble principle as it is, is to make the best of what sense has discovered. It is not in its nature to make any new discoveries; it can only proceed on such discoveries as are presented to it: and thus it is kept groveling on the surface of this gross material world, until faith comes to its relief, and by opening up spiritual and eternal things, furnisheth it with infinitely more noble business.

Upon the whole, we may conclude,

that the only way to become a Christian is that which the Apostle took, to be *crucified with Christ*. Not only to forsake our former ways and courses, our opposition to the laws and commandments of God; to give over sinning, and to turn to God: all this must be done; but when all this is done, it will not make one a Christian. We must, if ever we are such, be entered into Christ, and partake with him in his life: we must be conformed unto him, and bear his image. But this we can never do, without renouncing and giving up all inconsistent relations and dependencies whatsoever. We must enter into life the same way he did, by dying to a present world, and all our connections with it: and that can never be done, but by renouncing and giving up with Adam's life, and his way of living; by acknowledging ourselves to be, what we certainly are, whether we acknowledge it or not, nothing without God, and something worse than nothing, finners, and impotent rebels against his crown and dignity; confessing that we are absolutely at his mercy, and that we cannot enjoy a moment's reprieve but by grace, pure sovereign grace,

as

as it is held forth unto us in Christ Jesus
our Lord.

AND now let us reflect a little on the view we have been taking of the cross of Christ, as the only entrance into the Christian life. And,

1. It appears, that they are egregiously mistaken, who count it so easy a matter to become a Christian that it may be done when they will; or that they may even stumble into it, they know not how, or in what way. Our Lord's words express something that cannot be put in practice without the tenderest feelings: To deny ones self; to be stript, nay, to strip one's self, at once, of every thing we have to please or value ourselves upon, even all the pleasures and enjoyments to which we have been accustomed; to break off all conformity to and connection with the world; to renounce the nearest, the dearest, the most affecting relations, possessions, nay, life itself; and to take our venture with Christ, and find our all in him: To do as Abraham did on the divine call, when he went out from his father's house, his country, and possessions, to a place
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*Portrait of the Character
of a real Christian*

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*Portrait of Mr. Chauncy
of a real Christian*

which God promised to shew him: "He
"went out not knowing whither he
"went." He knew well what he left;
and so does the man who intends to be a
Christian; but what is before him is all a
secret. "It doth not yet appear," saith
the Apostle John, "what we shall be;"
but as Abraham did, so do all true Chri-
stians; they set out upon the call of God,
and are content to trust themselves to his
leading: "They take up their cross, and
"follow him."

These are such hard sayings, that the
men of the world, the children of Adam,
never have been, and most assuredly never
will be able to bear them: and yet many
such will needs be called Christians; and
thence have arisen almost all the errors and
corruptions that have been brought into
Christianity. To keep themselves in coun-
tenance, they are forced to attempt a coa-
lition of the two opposite interests, God,
and the world; and to reconcile the love
of God with the love of the world; to
graft religion, the Christian life, and the
hope of immortality, and the world to
come, upon the old withered stock of A-
dam's life, and accommodate the grace of
the

the gospel to the old law-plan, making faith and works joint recommendations to the divine favour and reward. And thus, while they pretend to take off the discouragements which seem to attend Christianity, by modeling Christ's yoke to their own humour, and making it light and easy, in another manner than ever he intended it; they destroy its beauty and strength at once, and leave it a common lifeless thing, in nothing different from the common productions of human service, which never could answer the purposes they were designed for.

Our Lord's yoke is indeed easy, and his burden light. But what makes it so, is that every thing which the world reckon the greatest hardship of all, viz. Entering upon the cross of Christ, and throwing off at once every thing that might be a burden, or make the commandments of God grievous to us. Nothing can do this but overcoming the world, 1 John v. 4.; and there is no way of overcoming it, but by breaking our connection with, and dependence on it. By the cross of Christ, those who are made conformable unto his death, are crucified
to

to the world, and the world is crucified to them. From that time none of these things can move them. The allurements and terrors of the world equally lose their force; because the Christian certainly knows he can neither be a gainer by the one, nor a loser by the other. Nay, and when the world has done its worst against him, by destroying not only the present comforts of life, but life itself, it then doth him the best service, by ridding him at once of the body of sin and death he groaned so much under.

2. Here we may see the divine proceedings with mankind, in an easy, agreeable, and consistent light; very different indeed from the fanciful views of men; but such as gives the fairest and most interesting views at once of the boundless wisdom and goodness of our heavenly Father, and at the same time of what is the real state and condition of mankind, both Christians and others, in a present world.

Much pains have been taken to make the ways of God appear equal to man. Many suppositions have been made to clear his proceedings from the imputation of injustice, or want of kindness to his creatures:

tures : but had men been contented to take God's ways as they are, that is, as himself has ordered a record to be made of them, and forborn loading him with what it does not appear he ever did, or designed to do, they would never have needed any of their apologies.

From what we have observed, it appears how kind it was to mankind in general, to put our first father into the circumstances in which he was originally placed in paradise; and no less so, to suffer him to fall into the condition wherein mankind now are. Had it been otherwise, we should have wanted the instructive and sensible documents of the reality of those spiritual and eternal things of which these were the figures, and how impossible it was for man to live but by God and his grace. The groundless fancies men have entertained of that primitive innocence, as if it was the state of human perfection; and the regret they express upon the loss of it, as the ruin of mankind; and the plan they form of man's recovery by Jesus Christ, as a sort of after-thought, to retrieve the error, or at least to fill up the blank made in the first creation, and for

which there never would have been any occasion, if man had done his duty as he ought and might have done: these, and the ill-founded guesses at what should have been the condition of mankind if Adam had not fallen, have created all the difficulty; whereas nothing can be more evident from the divine record, and the facts, as they stand open to every one's view, than that the whole paradisiacal state was no more than a very wise introduction of what the great creator designed to be the permanent state of mankind, whereby they should be distinguished from all his other creatures.

That God designed this for the permanent state of mankind, cannot be doubted, when we find, that this, in fact, is the established order, That men should be born, and live, and die, in a present world; but for a greatly higher end than any of the concerns of a present life. It was the new creation, to be raised out of the ruins of this, which God had mainly in view; and of this we may be perfectly assured by the person he has set at the head of it, so infinitely greater than the first man. There the permanent state of mankind is fixed, in a conformity

conformity and likeness to their glorious head; to live with him in the perfect possession and enjoyment of eternal life, where neither sin nor death can enter, nor any of that afflicting train of cares and sorrows which attend them.

The state of mankind, then, in a present life, is that of candidates and probationers, if you please to call them so, for that future state. Life and immortality are brought to light in the gospel; even the constitution of grace, published from the beginning of the world, and the first entrance of sin and death: and the only point we have to determine upon (a very momentous one indeed) is, whether we will content ourselves with this life we derive from the first Adam, and chuse to make our best of the powers and abilities we have; or renounce these altogether, with the life they belong to, and follow Christ to take our lot with him. And though nothing be truer, than that "without him we can do nothing;" it is as true, that "we are complete in him, and can do all things through Christ strengthening us." And if there is added a denunciation of the severest and most exemplary

punishment against the despisers of grace, those obstinate rebels who will not have God and his Anointed to reign over them, who will not live, unless they can live independent on God, and, as it were, in spite of him, in a way that he has declared they shall not live in; what fault can be found in the whole? They who will take God's way, and submit to his gracious constitution, are abundantly provided for; and those who will not, have none to blame but themselves. But,

3. If it be so, as certainly it is, that the only way of entering into Christ's life is by his cross; approving and ratifying what he did there in our name, and renouncing and giving up the life we derive from Adam, with all that belongs to it; we have before us one sure way of trying the truth of our pretensions, and a most serious call, seconded with the strongest and most interesting motives that can enter into the heart of man, to make use of it with the utmost seriousness and impartiality. It is a matter of the greatest moment; our all for time and eternity depends on it. It is a matter in which multitudes without number deceive themselves

selves into irretrievable destruction ; and yet the case lies so plainly before us, that it is astonishing how any one can be deceived. But what will not ignorance and partiality do, especially when supported by love to a present world ? We have seen how inconsistent this is with the love of God, which the life of Christ necessarily leads to. We will not stand to enter into particulars, which may be easily supplied from what we had occasion to observe on the import of *being crucified with Christ*, and the Christian's *fellowship* in his sufferings, and *conformity* unto his death.

I only observe, that there are what they call the lowest marks of grace, which, though well designed for the relief of weak distressed Christians, have been most miserably abused to the ruin of many. Surely there can be no grace but in Christ Jesus ; and unless " Christ Jesus be in a man," the Apostle assures us, he is a reprobate, 2 Cor. xiii. 5. And if Christ be in any man, the body is dead because of sin, Rom. viii. 10. ; or, in other words, " their old man is crucified with him ;" " for they that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh, with the lusts and affec-
tions."

"tions." It will not therefore, it cannot, be any mark of grace at all, that men are so far pleased with the cross of Christ, as to rest their hopes of pardon and eternal life on his sacrifice and sufferings. That is, right so far as it goes; but if this were all, Christ would be made the minister of sin indeed; and his cross, instead of being the destruction of sin, would be an encouragement to sin with hopes of impunity; which is the very odious imputation with which ignorant men load the doctrine of grace; not adverting, that none can have any benefit by his sacrifice, but they who enter into his death, and not only approve of, but join him in, what he there did, renouncing, and giving up for ever, into the hands of justice, that devoted life they have from Adam, with all the connections and concerns of it; arming themselves "with the same mind which was in Christ, when he suffered for them in the flesh," 1 Pet. iv. 1. What that mind was we have already seen; and an armour it is of such proof, that not the devil and the world combined, with all the natural and contracted corruption that is in us, can possibly prevail against it. This is the lowest

est mark that can be admitted; and where it is wanting, we must be very positive, that that condition is not to be rested in; because our Lord has said, that without it no man can be his disciple.

4. We have here before us the best directory ever was, or ever will be, composed for such as would be Christians indeed. This is the only door by which they can have admittance; but such a door as enters them upon a road, wherein a wayfaring man, though never so much a fool, cannot possibly err; being put under the conduct and guidance of one who will be sure to give a good account of him at last. It may be worth while to stop a little to survey the advantages and necessity of it. And here,

(1) I say, it is the only way by which one can enter into the way of life. It might be sufficient for proving this, that it is the only way God has authorised; and surely it belongs to him to determine what way every creature of his shall subsist. But we are not left to bare authority. It is the only way whereby one can enter into Christ, and be made either partaker with him, or conformable to him. It is the

the only way whereby we can get out of our connection with the first Adam, and that curse which rests upon his life: that is to say, it is the only way by which one can get out from under certain and unavoidable death, and be sure of a happy resurrection. For,

(2) If we are planted into the likeness of Christ's death, we shall most certainly be planted into the likeness of his resurrection, Rom. vi. 5. And did we know what that was, we should not only sacrifice that poor pittance of life that we have from Adam, with all that belongs to it; and all that we can, not to say expect from it, but what we can possibly enjoy in it, though we were to be made sole lords and proprietors of the universe. For though we were possessed of our first father's paradise, and perfection there, all these are but trifles, things of nothing, when compared with the Christian's prospect: "It does not indeed appear as yet what we shall be; but we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." Like HIM! like unto the exalted Son of God! Who would not deny themselves, take

take up their cross, and follow him, on such a prospect? What a nothing is it we renounce? What an unspeakable weight of glory is before us? But,

(3) Our encouragement doth not all lie beyond the grave, in the world to come; by this we become immediately and directly disciples and followers of Christ. It is an entrance into the way that leads to the glory of another world. It is an entrance into him who is "the way, the truth, and the life." He is the resurrection and the life; and these it actually enters the man into. It is the fellowship of his sufferings; and that makes the fruits of them sure. It is not renouncing life, but exchanging holdings; to hold of Christ instead of holding by Adam; and exchanging a poor, worthless, perishing life, for the best, the most durable, and eternal. It is uniting with the Son of God, and by him with God himself, the fountain of all life, and light, and fulness; the highest honour a creature can be capable of.

(4) It is taking part with Christ, approving and ratifying what he did in our name and behalf; and thus it is but a piece of common honesty. And indeed,

as matters stand, we must either adhere to him, and stand by what he did, or renounce and disclaim him, and all part and interest in him: and, to say nothing of the madness of such a conduct, and the danger that attends it, what an ungenerous, base, and ungrateful thing is it, to desert the blessed Son of God when he has done so much for us! “Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich.” And when he has acted so infinitely to our advantage, what can be said for our neglect, but that there was a price put into the hand of fools?

(5) It is arming ourselves with the same mind that was in him. To be of the same mind with the eternal Wisdom of God is certainly no small honour. It is a part, and a very valuable one, of our conformity to him; but it is such a conformity unto him as furnishes complete armour against all the temptations and trials we can possibly meet with. It gives the victory over the world at once, making it a dead thing to us, by our dying to it; and that kills at once all worldly affections and lusts which

which war against the Spirit. When the world was crucified to the Apostle, and he to the world, it lost all its charms and terrors at once, and he went on with the same easy unconcernedness under the loss of all things, as if he had not been in the body. And,

(6) to mention no more, This makes all the commandments of God easy and agreeable; takes off every weight which hangs upon the soul, pressing it down to the earth, and marring its heavenly conversation. It raises the Christian's courage and resolution, by the safety of his situation; as knowing how much greater HE is who is with him, than all that are or ever can be against him. And thus he goes on, in the prophet Habakkuk's spirit: "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, "neither shall fruit be in the vines, the "labour of the olives shall fail, and the "fields shall yield no meat, the flock shall "be cut off from the fold, and there shall "be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord." Nay, when "the "heavens are rolled together as a scroll, "and the elements melt with fervent "heat, when the earth, with all the in-
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"habitants

“habitants of it, are dissolved,” he can stand upon the ruins, and say, I have lost nothing; still I can “rejoice in the Lord,” and joy in the God of my salvation,”

DISSERTATION II.

Nevertheless I live: yet not I; but Christ liveth in me.

WE have, in the foregoing dissertation, been considering the way which God has appointed, and by which the children of Adam must enter upon the life of Christ, viz. their being *crucified with him*; that is, renouncing and giving up, as an accursed thing, the life derived from the earthly man, that the body may return to the dust, according to the righteous sentence pronounced upon our first father, whereby the present condition of mankind was unalterably fixed; which sentence therefore shall one day be executed, whether men consent to it or not.

But as conformity to Christ in his death includes, among other things, the same faith and hope which he had; the hope
of

of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, has promised before the world began: so they who are planted into a conformity unto his death, are at the same time planted into a conformity unto his resurrection. As they have hope in their death, they are not made ashamed. They have not indeed the same life restored which was given up; that would be but restoring them to their former unhappy situation, and little or nothing to their advantage: but they have a life, in all the views that can be taken of it, infinitely better, by which they are entered into that state of highest perfection in Christ which God designed that order of creatures for.

There is something very singular, but superlatively high, in the account the Apostle here gives of it as he found it in himself.

It was *the life by which he lived*; and which he was so perfectly pleased with, that he counted all that belongs to a present life, and a present world, but loss and dung compared with it.

But at the same time it was such a life that, in proper speech, he could not call it his own; he therefore corrects himself:

Yet

Yet not I. The honour of it was too high for him to assume.

— And having thus disclaimed any property in this life, he describes it as it really is, *Christ liveth in me.*

And as it is here that the whole secret of the Christian life lies; if we can but get at the proper meaning of the Apostle's expression, — *How Christ lives in the Christian,* — so as to be assured of the full import and real intention of it, we shall have a fair and consistent view of the essential and distinguishing nature of Christianity; which exalts it above every thing that hath ever passed under the name of religion, and even above that kind of Christianity which is to be found among those, who though they acknowledge the New Testament in general, yet will not submit to the decisions and determinations of it, unless they are modelled to their own taste.

— And here we must remember to carry along with us, what we observed in our entrance on this subject, concerning the nature of life in general, and the several species and kinds of it, according to the different powers bestowed by the creator;
the

the different ways of living the several ranks of creatures are made for, and the several purposes which they are designed to answer, in the appropriated stations assigned them throughout the universe; how impossible it is for them to live, that is, either to maintain or exert their respective powers, by any other means, or in any other manner, than that which their creator has appointed them; that while they are alive in one way, they are dead to all the rest; and whenever they attempt to support themselves in any other way, and neglect what belongs to their station, and the sustenance that is proper to it, they starve and perish.

On this constitution of things, and what is necessarily connected with it, depends the variety, the harmony, and order of the universe; and it needs no profound learning, or philosophical skill, to make it out. These truths stand not upon abstruse metaphysical reasonings, but on plain obvious facts, which fall under every one's observation. Thus, in the several kinds of terrestrial animals, birds, and fishes, every one can see, that each has what we call its proper element,
out

out of which it cannot live; its different kind of food and sustenance; so different, that what is life to one is death to another. They all have their different powers, or what we call instincts; and what is perfectly easy for one is utterly impossible to another. We might carry the same observation to the several classes and ranks of the same species; man particularly, being determined by no general instinct, affords an infinite variety of characters. All this is very justly imputed to what we call their different natures or constitutions; by which we mean, that they are so made; and thus we are led up to him that made them thus, and appointed them their several constitutions.

It is indeed but a short way our observation can reach; no further than a present world; and no further even there than things are gross enough to fall under some of our senses. But the reason these sensible observations land us in, extends as far as the creation does; that is, as far as there are any creatures endued with life, or vital active powers. So far as these are different one from another, there are different constitutions: and these necessarily lead

lead to different ways of subsisting and acting.

There is a very remarkable divine constitution concerning man, and the manner of his subsistence, referred to by our Saviour, Matth. iv. 4. "That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." In Deuteronomy, viii. 3. the constitution stands thus, "by every outgathering from the mouth of Jehovah:" A matter of such moment, that we find it given as the reason of a forty years continued miracle; feeding the Israelites with manna in the wilderness, that they might know this truth; and know it so as to be thoroughly confirmed in it by their own experience.

But what occasion, may one say, for such a profusion of miracles in so plain a case? for though bread is the ordinary support of man's life; yet who is there so ignorant as not to know, that the almighty creator can subsist his creatures without it, and indeed with whatever he pleases to appoint for that purpose, as well as manna? This is easily said, but not so easily believed; much less depended on when

one is reduced to want bread. But however that is, there was evidently a much higher intention in giving the manna, and likewise the water from the rock, than merely to bring men to live in a dutiful dependence on God for the subsistence of a present life. It leads us naturally to think of another way of living, and of course another way of subsisting in life, than that which the children of Adam have naturally by ordinary food. It was, as almost every thing about that people was, a figure, an image, or sensible representation, of that life, and way of living, which God had set up from the beginning of the world in the seed of the woman; and which, besides all the particular revelations of it, he renewed to Abraham, the father of that people, for him and his seed. This intention of the manna, the bread from heaven, our Lord opens at large, John vi.; and thence the Apostle, 1 Cor. x. 3. 4. calls it the *spiritual meat*, and the waters from the rock the *spiritual drink*; referring directly to Christ, the great ordinance of God, for the support and maintenance of the spiritual and eternal life.

This

This general point stands so strongly supported by all the views we have given of Christ either in the Old Testament or in the New, and the many strong expressions there made use of, (such as, "our living by him;" his being "the resurrection and the life;" not only as the author of life to his people, but as their life itself), that it is not questioned by any who so much as pretend to be Christians, that he is certainly "the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him." But as the subject is so noble in itself, and such as we are all nearly interested in, it will become us to pass it over with a general or superficial view, when we are furnished so plentifully with materials to lead us further: nor can we ever satisfy ourselves, until we see how fitly these expressions are used, and particularly this which we have before us, that it is not so properly *the man who lives*, as it is *Christ that liveth* in him.

Here we have three distinct propositions, which must all be kept in view, in order to make out the full meaning of the Apostle's words:

1. That Christ lives.

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2. That

2. That this living Christ is in the Christian.—And,

3. That he lives in the Christian in such a manner, that it is not so properly the Christian that lives, as Christ that liveth in him.

Our Lord explains the whole in its order and connection, in terms very similar to those of the Apostle, John vi. 57. “As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.” — Which words plainly import,

That Christ, sent as he is by the Father, lives by him.

That Christ is united to the Christian, as food is to the body.—And,

That the Christian lives by Christ thus in him, as He does by the Father.

This carries something in it incomprehensibly high; such an union with God, the fountain of life, by the mediation of Jesus Christ, that it is by his standing between God and them, closely and indissolubly united to God on one side, and to them on the other, that the life of God is conveyed to, and maintained in them, not barely in that low way which some
call

call *the life of God in the soul of man*, a sort of conformity unto what they style *the moral perfections of the divine nature*, but by a real conveyance of these perfections and powers in their proper measure, in which that divine temper is founded.—It may be worth while to consider the matter somewhat more particularly. And,

I. CHRIST lives, and lives by the Father. There the foundation and groundwork of the Christian life is laid, just as the foundation of the natural life was laid in Adam; all that was necessary for the designed propagation of either, was laid ready in their respective heads. Both were the pattern, the standard upon which all succeeding generations were to be formed; and by the provision made in them, security was taken for the conveyance of life respectively to all that ever should share in either, or were designed in the eternal counsels to do so. And could we distinctly and fully survey the life that lies in the head, and the provision there made, we might see all that was to follow: but this is a sort of knowledge not made for man; and it is plain madness to attempt it,
much

much more to build conclusions upon it, any further than God has been pleased to manifest and reveal it to us. But so far as he has, we should be both very ungrateful to him, and injurious to ourselves, if we did not make it our business to improve it to the best advantage: and as our Lord holds it forth to us as the pattern upon which the Christian life is formed, and at the same time as the best assurance we can have of the truth and certainty of it, we shall be much to blame, if, through our negligence, we fall short of the intention of this kind intimation.

There is, without all doubt, a mystery in the personal life of Jesus Christ, as there is in his union with the Father; such as it is impossible for human apprehension to penetrate, any more than to "find out the Almighty to perfection." When we speak of the life of Jesus, we speak of a man assumed into, not only the nearest relation to, but likewise the most intimate union and connection with the eternal God. It is by much too low to conceive of him as a man who hath God dwelling or abiding in him; though even that carries something in it inconceivably high; as, on the other

*Definition of ever last person
Christ as the eternal God*

other hand, it is absurd and contradictory to imagine God and man to be so mixed together in his person, and transformed mutually into one another, that there should remain no distinction. But yet the man has no separate being or subsistence, but in union with the Deity; and therefore no separate life, or any powers and actings of it. When he was in the world, and nothing but the man appeared to vulgar eyes, yet he said positively, "that he and the Father were one;" "that he did nothing of himself;" nay, "that he did whatever the Father did:" and even when he seemed to be forsaken, and in certain cases, particularly in his temptations in the wilderness, and his sufferings upon the cross, was in some sense really forsaken, and left to himself; yet was not the union then dissolved; he still lived by the Father, even when he laid down the perishing life he took up from Adam; and, we may say, he never lived so properly as when he was parting, and especially after he had parted with it. And thence it is we find, that the Christian's conformity to Christ is not stated upon what He was in this world, but upon his death, and resurrection

urrection from the dead; Phil. iii. 10.; Col. iii. 3. 4.; Rom. vi. 5. *et seqq.*; 1 John iii. 2.; and every where we find that subject set before us in this light.

Thus, then, the case stands: In God is the fountain of life; and it is his distinguishing property to have life in himself, which can be communicated to no mere creature. But he can communicate life, as he does being, out of the all-sufficiency of his own fulness; that is, vital powers and activity, in such various and different degrees as he sees fit; by sending forth his Spirit, who worketh in every one according as he willeth. Thus we find the divine power exerted and put forth on every occasion; which we will not stand particularly to instance. And the nearer any creature is brought to God, the fountain of life, the more nearly doth that creature partake of his Spirit, and consequently of all the powers of life: and perhaps it will be found, that life, and all the powers of it, are more properly the agency of the divine Spirit than of the man himself. But this must not be extended to *dead works*, as we find them called by him who gives nothing a wrong name: these proceed from the want
of

of life. But such as are the proper exercises and native productions of life, from Bezaleel and Aholiab's manual skill, to the Apostle Paul's heroick courage and resolution, we find always attributed to the Spirit of God, "in whom we live, and move, and have our being," in a much higher sense than can be well apprehended in our present state of darkness and ignorance.

As the nearness then, or rather the oneness subsisting in the person of Jesus, of the man with the Deity, is altogether of a singular nature, so must his life likewise be; so singular, that in the whole creation of God we have good reason to believe it has nothing parallel to it. He lives by the Father in such a way as is peculiar unto that situation; not only directly and immediately, as no other man can, but in such a measure and degree as is incompatible to a mere creature. Thus we find himself asserting, John v. 26. "As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he likewise given to the Son to have life in himself;" and "as the Father raiseth the dead, and quickeneth whom he will, so also doth the Son." There is at once the

possession and exercise of the divine life, with all the powers belonging to it, and both in such an appropriated manner, in himself, as leaves no characteristic to distinguish the life of the Father from that of the Son, except that it is given him of the Father, and he lives by him. And here it must be remembered, that it is the man Jesus who speaks; that we may not be induced to confine this so high a privilege to the divine nature in his person; nor, which is worse, degrade the Deity in him to an inferior and dependent station. In a suitableness unto this, we find it declared, "that in him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily;" inasmuch that the Spirit is not given unto him by measure; and the Father, in his love, has given all things into his hand, John iii. 34. 35.; inasmuch that we find this same Spirit so perfectly in him, and so much at his disposal, that he takes a designation from the Son as well as from the Father; and is sent by him, with all his gifts and graces, where he pleases. Thus he promised to his disciples; and he performed his promise on the day of Pentecost, in such a sensible manner, as left no

room to doubt, "that the same Jesus who
 " was crucified, was made both Lord and
 " Christ." Thus, then, the Son of God
 lives the very life of the Father. But,

II. THIS living Christ *is in* the Christian;
 that is, abides and dwells in him. This
 is a point the Spirit of God has very much
 laboured to impress the hearts of men
 with; and it is a point of infinite moment
 to them. "Search your own selves,"
 says the Apostle, 2 Cor. xiii. 5.: "know
 " ye not your own selves, that Jesus
 " Christ is in you, unless ye be repro-
 " bates?" Our Lord began to inculcate
 it in the days of his flesh, and instructed
 his apostles and disciples to insist upon it
 as the only thing that could make one a
 Christian. They did so; and have made
a man in Christ the description of such an
 one. And he and they have left nothing
 out that could contribute any thing to
 lead us into proper apprehensions of the
 nearness and intimacy of that union which
 is expressed by it: from the relation and
 union which subsists between Adam and
 his seed, between the vine or olive and
 the branches, between husband and wife,

the head and the members, the food and the body; and when these will not answer, it is carried infinitely above all, to that union which subsists between the Father and the Son; which makes those who are joined to him not only one body, in whatever sense that is taken, but one spirit; and that carries it greatly higher than it is possible in our present state to apprehend. Thus the apostles knew what they said, when they told the men in Christ, that their "life was hid," and "that it doth not yet appear what they shall be."

This account of the union between Christ and Christians is near of kin to that which he gives of himself, and which the Apostle took up from him, viz. That he is their life: "I am the resurrection, and the life," John xi. 25." and "when Christ who is our life shall appear," Col. iii. 4. That oneness with the Father, and fulness of Spirit and life to which the man Jesus was exalted, promiseth much to those who stand related to him, as partakers with him in the same human nature. It gives the prospect of another sort of a head than they had in Adam, and

and another sort of life than either that which he conveyed to them, or that which he forfeited. And as he was at the same time the pattern of human perfection, whose image all his are to bear, it lays a sure foundation for the most exalted hope; as in him we see how near a man may be brought to God, especially when we know, as we have it at large declared to us, that the only design of placing him in that station, and enduing him in so ample a manner, was to set up a proper medium, or mean, by whom an union, and answerable communion, between God and mankind, might be established, and maintained inviolably, without any danger either of interruption or dissolution.

It was in this view we considered him above, as the great Mediator between God and man, performing the terms of eternal life for them, and in their name receiving all the fulness of it, to be communicated and conveyed to them in the proper time and way. As then the living Father sent him, and he lives by the Father, in that perfect oneness with him, and communion with him, in the same Spirit and life; so it is necessary that he

unite

unite himself to them, in order to make them sharers in the same Spirit and life which dwelleth in him without measure; that is, as himself describes it, the Father in him, and he in them; and again, they in him, and he in the Father, John xvii. And thus they come to be, through him, united to God, the great fountain of life, and to live upon God by him.

There is some variety in the expressions made use of by the Spirit of God to express this communication of the spiritual and eternal life, which is the immediate consequence of the Christian's union with Christ. Sometimes they are said to live through him, sometimes by him; sometimes again, to live upon him, as their proper nourishment and support, and very often as their life itself; and sometimes again, as Christ is said to be in them, so also to live in them, as the Apostle here describes the life which he lived.— And this is the

III. THIRD thing we took notice of in the description: This living Christ not only is, or abides, in all real Christians, but also *lives* in them; which has been very differently

differently understood, according to the different apprehensions men have had of their union with him, which is indeed the ground and foundation of this. And as there have been, and still are, a multitude of men, who will needs be called Christians, who yet seem desirous to be as little obliged to Christ, and to have as little dependence on him, as possible, both the one and the other have been in effect explained away. I will not stand to follow groundless imaginations; but gather up, as near as I can, the mind of Christ himself, as he has revealed it unto us, in the record he has given us by his Spirit; and which will be found agreeable to the experience and inward sense of all such as are Christians indeed, and may approve itself to the consciences of all such as are willing to submit themselves to God. And here,

1. It is to be adverted to, that the man, the child of Adam, cannot live of himself; and therefore it cannot properly be said, that *he* lives at all. Something of this is true of every creature, who, having no more but a borrowed being, cannot live but by borrowed support. But whatever

ever is owing to God and his Spirit in other cases, there are peculiar circumstances in the Christian life that make it impossible for him either to attain or live the Christian life. We had occasion to observe, in the foregoing dissertation, how all the children of Adam are, by the judgement given upon their first father, bound under death; really, and to all intents and purposes, dead to God, and the spiritual world, and consequently to all the actings and exercises of the spiritual life; "without God," either the knowledge of him, or any interest in him; real Atheists, and "without hope in the world," until they are instructed and taught by the Spirit of Christ, revealing eternal and unseen things, as they lie in the divine record. And as for our bodies, no body makes any doubt, that they will return to the dust whence they were taken. And when the Christian comes to be crucified with Christ, he makes a renunciation only of what was not worth keeping, and indeed of what it was impossible for him to hold. What further views and hopes he has, are all of them so founded in Christ, and so entirely owing to him,

him, that there cannot be a greater truth uttered, than that "without him we can do nothing;" and therefore nothing more just than to acknowledge it, and give him the glory, and nothing more base than to assume any thing to ourselves.

And yet there is not one among all the truths of God the haughty spirit of the child of Adam is more loath to submit to. Men have some how or other got their heads full of the dignity of the human nature, and the great things they are capable of; great things indeed in Christ, where the true dignity of the human nature lies; but as they are strangers to this, their overbearing confidence in themselves can have no other foundation than what it commonly has in other cases, ignorance and mistake. Their first father, whose image they bear, would needs be wiser than ever God designed him; and his posterity bear the marks of his infatuation, disdaining to be taught of God, nay disdaining heaven itself, unless they can earn it by their own achievements. No wonder if they are left to reap the fruit of their own doings, the only thing that will convince them of their nothingness

and folly at once. The truth is so palpable, that any one may feel it who can feel at all; and nothing can be a stronger evidence that they are dead when they do not. But the "fool is wiser in his own conceit, than seven men that can render a reason." And surely poor is the prospect of those who cannot live but in direct opposition to a divine constitution. For,

2. It is by Christ alone that any of the children of Adam can be delivered from the power of death. Vain men have amused themselves and the world with empty notions of a natural immortality of the soul, and an after state of rewards and punishments. "Life and immortality are indeed brought to light in the gospel," and were published to a perishing world from the very beginning of it. Thence they must have taken the hint of it: for surely nature can say nothing of God's intentions and designs, how long or how short a time he has assigned for their duration, and what purposes he has designed them for. The children of Adam are evidently made for a present world, to live upon the creature, and are by no means furnished

furnished for any other. And what is this boasted immortality? The body is laid in the dust, and nature knows nothing of a resurrection. If the soul should continue to live, it is not the man; it must be transformed into another sort of being; and, alas! how ill provided are the best of the kind for the spiritual world, which they have not, and indeed cannot have; any consistent notion of.

The scriptures of truth allow of no such fanciful imaginations. Life and immortality stand there strongly and inseparably connected with the resurrection of the body, exemplified and strongly instructed by the resurrection of Christ, a most proper mean of begetting us again unto a *lively hope*, as the Apostle emphatically expresses the true Christian's prospect of eternity. And though it be true, that the soul must subsist separately until the end of the world, there is proper provision made for it in that new creation in Christ Jesus, whereby Christians are begotten and born again, of the incorruptible seed, by the power and efficacy of the Spirit of the living God, and are entered upon a new life, and brought into the spiritual and e-

ternal world, with the proper provision of powers and abilities becoming the new creature, and suitable to the station, the business, and enjoyments, of that life they are entered upon.

But all this is in Christ Jesus, and in him only: "For there is no other name given under heaven whereby we must be saved." This stands an inviolable constitution of heaven: hence Christ bears the name of a Saviour; and he had the name given him by one, and the only one who had authority to give it. And to set up any other person or thing, is to affront him in the most open manner, and at the same time the authority that appointed him. It is rebelling against the God of heaven in a more notorious manner than ever our first father did; and therefore must, as it certainly will, have a more dreadful issue.

But Christ is at the same time the only person who is able to save. Put the case, there was a free pardon proclaimed unto the children of Adam, (and that in effect is the case); what would be the effect of it? Salvation, that is, deliverance from the curse of the law, loosing the bands by which

which sin held miserable mortals under death, is a great matter indeed; and it is the only foundation on which there is, or can be, a possibility of entering into life. But can they raise themselves from the dead? Can they approach the fountain of life, an unknown God, and thence provide themselves with the necessary powers of life? Can they break off the long confirmed habits and customs they have contracted in following the course of this world? Can they, all of a sudden, or indeed with all the powers and perseverance they can command, enter a course directly opposite to that which their hearts, their sentiments, their whole soul, has been formed on since they came into the world; which their whole frame and constitution naturally leads them to; and all these seconded and supported by an invisible power, “the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience;” whose motions we cannot perceive, and whose power and cunning we are by no means match for, tho’ we are assured, “he goes about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour?” These are but hints of the difficulties and opposition we must lay our account

account with; but such as must fill the stoutest heart with despair, not to be removed but by the prospect of such a Saviour as the gospel gives us in Jesus Christ. We would be much in the same case as David was with Saul, one day or other we must fall by this or the other enemy, and, like him, as multitudes do, take sanctuary in the land of the Philistines. But,

3. In Christ Jesus is lodged, for the children of men, all the fulness of provision necessary for recovering and raising up the dead sons of Adam unto eternal life. We need no more to assure us of this, than to consider his resurrection, and the glory that followed; the life he then entered upon; the power lodged in his hand, all power in heaven and earth; and the authority, the absolute authority, he is invested with over all principalities and powers, both in this world and the world to come, visible and invisible; the keys of hell and of death committed unto him; with perfect power to raise the dead, to give eternal life to whom he will, and to determine the everlasting condition of mankind. Whosoever believes these things, must own, "that he is able
" to

“to save to the uttermost all that come
“unto God through him.” But generals, however strong, make but a faint impression; and if we propose to make the proper advantages, this fulness of power we find lodged in him must be more particularly considered.

And in order thereto we must begin where the apparent necessities of mankind do; that total darkness, or ignorance of God, and the world of spirits, which men are born with, and which continues in multitudes after all the pains that have been taken with them. Something of the knowledge of God has indeed been in the world ever since there were men in it, and thence a handle has been taken to persuade the world it was natural: and numbers have even imagined, they could demonstrate the thing; with what success, the experience of all ages has shown. The Apostle declares it in a word, “The world
“by wisdom knew not God;” the knowledge of God was lost in the hands of the greatest geniuses that ever appeared among men; and had not the only begotten, who is in the bosom of the Father, declared the invisible God, they would have been
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in the same case still. And when the matter is duly considered, it will appear, that "no man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him," Luke x. 22.

He has done it accordingly, not by metaphysical reasonings, and quirks of philosophy, which few are able to apprehend, and can reach no further than the heads of those who do; but in a manner perfectly suited to the constitution and present state of mankind; opening his eternal counsels, and instructing his power and Godhead by the works which he has done; presenting a living image of him in himself, and leading forward our apprehensions to spiritual and unseen things, by sensible representations, either natural, or instituted for the purpose. Thus our first parents were taught in paradise. Thus they after their expulsion, and the succeeding patriarchs, were taught, down to Moses, who was employed to lay together, in one system, all the institutions and ordinances which were necessary to make out a perfect figure, resemblance, and sensible representation of God's ways with men, and the manner in which they were
to

to deal with him. The whole business of the Spirit of Christ speaking in the prophets, was to keep these uncorrupted, to explain and inculcate the true intention of them, and to reclaim the people from their abuses and errors, until himself came, and took off the vail from the face of Moses, and showed the glory of God shining forth, and manifesting itself, in his person and ministry, the end of all these ordinances, which are now abolished.

But this is not the only excellency of his manner of teaching; he can do what never another could; he can not only speak to the ear, but can give capacity to apprehend and understand; he teaches not only the mind and understanding, but the heart and soul; and not only conveys notions and conceptions, but that very Spirit and wisdom which he himself possesses; by this means forming every disciple of his into the same views, sentiments, and conduct, to make out a perfect resemblance of their great instructor.

But in the course of this instruction men come to discover that they are sinners, and thereby exposed to proper punishment from the hand of their creator,

the great sovereign of heaven and earth. And the more they know of him, the more vile and base does sin appear, and the more vile and base do they find themselves; two points which have perplexed the world from the earliest accounts we have of men; and which accordingly gave rise to that variety of sacrifices, lustrations, purifications, and washings, which have been always the object of their greatest attention. Human wisdom could discover the vanity of these methods of placating the Deity, and purifying from the defilement of sin; but could never devise any thing which could purge the conscience, or make men easy; for this plain good reason, That they had no assurance of being accepted of God. The sacrifice and intercession of the great high-priest was the only method which had the divine approbation; and having that so fully manifested in the sacred record, a foundation is thereby laid upon which the weary soul can rest.

But in the same course of instruction it is discovered, that sin is the death of the soul, as, in its very nature, it separates from God; because, in its very nature,
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it is a forsaking and departing from him; and the soul feels itself dead, and utterly incapable, with all its boasted powers, to recover itself, or rather rise up to the life of God. The children of Adam under the dispensation of the gospel of grace, can hear the report of another world, another life, and another way of living. They feel they want it; but how to come at it, they can never discover, because they are strangers to the Spirit of Christ, and the astonishing effects of his uniting with the souls of men. This the divine teacher discovers as lodged in his hand, and with him all the supplies of spiritual life, and the powers belonging to it; which he is intrusted to dispense and give forth at his pleasure, as the several occasions and necessities of his people require. And hence,

4. The Lord Jesus is the only way in and by which spiritual and eternal life, with all the perfections and powers belonging to it, can be conveyed from the great fountain of life, the all-sufficiency and fulness of the great creator, to Adam's perishing children. This was represented very fairly in the natural father, the first man, the figure of him who was to come;

and there evidence was given, that mankind was one of those species of creatures which do not receive their life and being directly and immediately from their maker's hands. In the first father the life of all his children subsisted, to be conveyed down from generation to generation to the end of the world, by such an unalterable constitution, that it is naturally impossible to bring one single man into the world in any other manner; and thus Adam may be said, in a certain sense, to live in all his posterity.

This is a fair illustration of that important truth before us, that the Christian life, all that fulness of spiritual powers and activity, which ever did, or ever will, appear among men, was originally lodged in the hands of their great Redeemer, "the second man, who is the Lord from heaven;" and from whom it is derived down to the several generations of Christians from the beginning to the end of the world, in the course of regeneration, and the new birth; which makes it equally impossible to enter into the spiritual and eternal world, and to live that life, by any other means.

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But it is greatly more than a bare illustration; it is one of the strongest proofs that can be of the truth and certainty of the thing. This it would be, if there were no more in it than that the first Adam was by divine designation and appointment the figure of Jesus Christ, who was to come: and that he was so, the Apostle not only expressly says, Rom. v. 12. *et seqq.*; but opens and explains at large the particulars in which he was so. There, and especially 1 Cor. xv. 45.—50. he insists at large on this very view of him; and shews how the several descendents of both are like their root and original, and bear their image, and accordingly live as they did.

But this is not all: the figure leads us to yet a fuller evidence; as both the one and the other are in this manner set at the head of mankind by a divine constitution, which all the created powers in the universe cannot set aside. I need not repeat what has been oftener than once observed already, and carries its own evidence along with it, that the divine constitution is what makes the nature of things; that is, every thing to be what it is; and
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found all those relations on which what our fashionable writers call eternal truths have all their dependence. And if any should ask, how the activity and powers belonging to the inhabitants of the spiritual and eternal world, can only be communicated by Jesus Christ? we need but ask them again, whence it is that man's present life, and the powers attending it, cannot be conveyed but from Adam? The reason both of the one and the other is, that God hath so ordained and appointed; and it is unnatural boldness to ask, how he came to do so?

And yet he has condescended to answer the important question, and has given us a variety of reasons for his so doing. I shall mention only two of them; *1st*, To reduce man to proper acknowledgements, that he lives only by the grace of his creator; and, *2dly*, To make life sure to him, that it shall never be either forfeited or taken away from him.

To live by the grace, that is, the free gift and bounty of the creator, is evidently the only way of living that can become a creature; nay, we may say, that a creature is capable of. It is the only way of living

living that can give the creator the glory and honour that belongs to him, and the only way that can maintain in the creature's heart such a sense of his favour and astonishing goodness, as can make it perfectly happy in the exercises of pure unalloyed love. This notwithstanding was a lesson our first father very soon forgot; and nothing would satisfy him but independent liberty. In the event of this his attempt we have a standing sensible document of its native consequence and tendency, misery and death. In Christ, and the way of living mankind are bound to in him, there is no room left for any such dangerous imagination. The lodging life, with all the furniture of it, in his hand, the bestowing, the preserving, the perfecting of it, affords the most substantial and affecting evidence that all is of grace; so that the man who sees and believes the truth as it is in Jesus, has nothing left him but eternal acknowledgements and love to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus, for the grace that is brought to us in him. This is the most perfect happiness and unalloyed enjoyment a creature can be capable of here or hereafter.

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*There may be said in respect
of the temporal life and happiness
of things as well as of spiritual ones*

In the instructive case of our first father, we have likewise the most palpable evidence, how unfit the most perfect man is to have his life and happiness lodged in his own hand. A fitter than he was certainly never found among his posterity, that "Son of man" only excepted, whom our gracious God has pitched on, and fitted up for this purpose. This is the reason the Apostle gives why the inheritance must be of grace, Rom. iv. 16. "That the promise might be sure to all the seed." And as it could never be so in the hand of man, it is lodged in his who has perfectly fulfilled the terms of life, and therefore cannot miscarry by forfeiture; and at the same time is perfectly proof against open force; so that nothing can mar the effectual conveyance of it, and carrying it on to the highest pitch of perfection, "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

We might add to all this another consideration, viz. That the mediation of Christ is the only way, as matters stand between God and mankind, by which any of the children of Adam can stand before God, or have any dealings at all with him.

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Much has been written to show, that God could not, in a consistency with the honour that is due unto the sovereign of the universe, nor indeed with his own perfections, and particularly his holiness, which is the result of all, have any thing to do with such a creature as man, unless it was to treat him in such a manner as a rebellious creature deserves. And indeed, if we understand ourselves, this is the light in which a conscience duly affected with the evil of sin will set the matter. But the Spirit of God most ordinarily puts it on another footing, viz. the incapacity of man to have any immediate dealings with God. As his glory must overwhelm us, unless it be qualified as it is in Christ Jesus, the medium by which it is presented to us; so an evil conscience at the same time, that is, the consciousness of what we really are, breaks our confidence in God, and fills us with diffidence, jealousies, and fears; which naturally produce in creatures of our make coldness, aversion, and even direct enmity, against what he really is; which no where shows itself with greater strength than in the pains which we see taken by men to form God

into such a mould as suits their own circumstances. These can only be removed by the mediation of Christ, and the place he holds between God and man. There it is, and there only, that men recover confidence in God, the sole foundation on which the love of God, and all true religion, of which it is the spirit and substance, stands. Through him they are called to come, and through him they can come, with boldness, unto a throne of grace, enter the *Holy of Holiness*, and stand with pleasure and joy before their heavenly Father. Whatever others do, they who know how hard a thing it is, even with all the advantages we have by Jesus, for a guilty sinner ever to hope for any thing from God's hand, will feel how absolutely impossible it must have been without it.

It is in this view that our Lord sets himself forth to our observation, particularly John vi. not only as the giver of life, and the giver of the bread or meat which endures unto eternal life, but as that very bread which came down from heaven, the proper sustenance of the spiritual and eternal life, and sent into the world by the Father for that very purpose.

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It is in consequence of this that we find the disciples acknowledging, "that he had the " words of eternal life;" those words which proceed out of the mouth of God, by which men live, viz. the mighty power of God, by which life is supported as effectually, and in as proper a manner, as the natural life is supported by natural food. And hence,

5. We have the Lord Jesus set before us, as uniting himself with men, and thereby communicating his Spirit and life to them; and thus making effectual the purpose of having the fulness of God lodged in him for their behoof. We observed before, how they who are joined to him are one spirit; "and if any man have not his " Spirit, he is none of his." The truth and reality of this, as also the effects produced by it, we have sensible evidence of in the case of the apostles on the day of Pentecost. That was the fulfilment of a particular promise made to them; and a seal or confirmation of the general promise made to all Christians. By it we see what the Spirit of Christ can do; things so impossible in nature, that nothing but the event could have rendered them credible;

and which leaves us no room to doubt of the promised ordinary effects of the Spirit of Christ given to ordinary Christians.

And why should we doubt, or what colour can there be of making any question about the power of God, for answering any purpose it is applied to? The Spirit of Christ is that very divine power which gave life and being to every creature in the first creation; that very power which endued men with all the extraordinary gifts and qualifications that ever were found among them; and therefore must be the proper agent in the new creation, and the author of all the powers which are necessary for the business and enjoyments there. It is true his way of operating is secret, and hid from sensible observation; but such are all the operations of spirits, even of God himself; and not perceivable but by the effects: and when these are terminated upon the spirits of men, they can be perceived only by them; and no other man can say, whether they are real or imaginary, until it be determined by sensible facts, the effect thereof in their lives and conversations.

Such is the nature of the spiritual life:

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it is all hidden and secret, wrought by one invisible agent upon another, the Spirit of God upon the soul of man. But why should the men of the world account it mere enthusiastic delusion, because they feel it not themselves, and can conceive of no way of God's communicating life, or perfections of any kind, to man, but that imperfect external one of reasoning and motive? Those who believe there ever was such a thing as creation, can entertain no doubt of the possibility of inspiration, which is but exerting the same kind of power, giving being to something which was not before. Those who doubt of it, will yet acknowledge, that he who made the soul at first, can easily add new perfections and powers; can bring in new light to the understanding; enlarge the apprehensive capacity; form the sentiments, and establish the heart and affections upon them. And what is that but a more particular account of the meaning of that word, which properly expresses the influence the Spirit of God has upon the spirit of man, when he unites himself to it for any particular purposes, particularly those of the spiritual life?

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And can it be thought impossible that God should thus unite himself with man, after what is actually done, and demonstrated in the strongest manner, in the person of Jesus? How could he be assumed into that perfect oneness with the Father? and was it not for this very purpose that he was assumed, and had the Spirit given to dwell in him in all his fulness, to assure men, that God would indeed by his means dwell with them, and give his Spirit into theirs, to form them up into a temple, an habitation for God, by his means? He who raised the man Jesus so much above man, even while he was numbered among the sons of Adam, and much more so when he was raised from the dead, and put in possession of a life infinitely above it, can with the same ease take any of the children of Adam he pleaseth into what measures of conformity to him he sees proper. That Spirit which made apostles of fishermen, which took the foolish and weak things of the world, and by them confounded and brought to nought all the power and wisdom that were in it, can easily accomplish the new creature,

creature, and furnish him out with all that is necessary for living to God.

And when it is further considered, that this same Spirit which is given, and thus unites himself to their spirits, is the Spirit of Jesus, the Spirit that dwells in him, and the very principle of his life by which he lives, and possesses all that power and activity in heaven and in earth; how can we conceive of it otherwise, than as Christ uniting himself to them in the nearest and most intimate manner, and sharing his life with them, and making them partakers of it, with all the powers and perfections which belong to it? And thus he is very properly their life, their strength, their all; and thus one may very justly say with the Apostle, it is not they that live, but Christ that lives in them. For,

1. By him they are quickened, and made alive, when they had no life, nor any of the powers of life, in themselves. By his right they hold, and in him all their hopes and prospects are founded; and to him belongs the disposal of them. When they look to themselves, they find nothing but weakness and emptiness; not being sufficient of themselves

selves so much as to think any thing as of themselves, far less to do. And therefore,

2. All the powers of life are entirely in his hand, and under his direction and management. The preservation and continuance of them, the growth and increase, and the completement of them according to their measure, are all his doing. It is not in man, no not in the best of men, to order their own ways. And tho' they can do all things through Christ strengthening them, yet without him, with all the strength and resolution they can command, they are altogether unable to stand against the least temptation that casts up in their way. According to the measure in which his Spirit exerts his powers in the soul, such is their measure of life, light, holiness, consolation, and joy.

3. The exercises and actings of the spiritual life in every part, are all under his direction for the same reason. It was by the grace of God that even the Apostle Paul was what he was; and when he had laboured more abundantly than all the other apostles, he disclaims the honour of it: "Yet not I," saith he, "but the grace of
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"God that is with me," 1 Cor. xv. 10.; and no wonder, when he ascribes his life only to Christ living in him. And therefore,

4. All the fruit of the spiritual life, all the good that the Christian either does or receives, is owing entirely to Christ, and the glory of it belongs entirely to him: "He made us, and not we ourselves." And we are so made, that indeed the true Christian is no more than a sort of copy, an image, of him, drawn by his own hand; and the Christian life is but the life of Christ extended and drawn out into its proper consequences and effects. It was only the vanity of man that ever made him imagine himself any thing; and the strength and glory of the Christian life lies in renouncing all pretensions to it.

AND now, from this general view of the Christian life, we may be enabled to draw out something of its true and distinguishing nature; by which the innumerable mistakes about it may be rectified; and men who would be Christians, directed what they are to aim at, and what measures they are to take.

And here it must be observed, that the

Christian life may be considered either in its beginnings in this world, while the Christian lives in the flesh; or in its perfection in the world to come: the one is commonly called the state of *grace*, the other of *glory*. There are innumerable circumstantial differences; and so is there in common life between infancy and manhood. But these are not different lives; but different stages and degrees of the same life, carrying on to its perfection by nutriture and culture; suited unto the nature, the frame, and constitution, of the creature, under the provision made by the great creator for these purposes, and his blessing upon them: and the blessing of God is nothing but the interposal of his Spirit and power for making these means effectual; and none of them can ever rise higher, in the order of causes, than instruments in his hand, which he employs at pleasure. Hereby the whole universe is kept in an entire dependence on him; so that there can be no evil in the universe but what is under his direction: A truth far from being minded so generally as it is acknowledged.

When we speak then of the life of Christians,

stians, we take in both these views of it; from the first moment of their regeneration and new birth, that the seed of God enters into them, and the Spirit of Christ animates and enlivens them, through all the intermediate degrees, to their perfect conformity to their glorious head; when Adam's life and Adam's world shall be destroyed together. This is a kind of life, even in the lowest degrees of it, as different from all others, as they are from one another. The only sort of life that pretends any relation to it, is that which we derive from Adam, or rather that which Adam was possessed of in his first paradisiacal state; and numbers who will needs be reckoned Christians, think there needs no more to make one a Christian, than to have that integrity and uprightness restored to them; and that the life of Christ may very easily, and must be ingrafted upon that which we have from him. The vanity of such imaginations we have shown in the former part: That the Christian life is as different, even from innocent Adam's, as the substance is from the shadow, the truth of the thing from the figure and outward representation of it;

and that the life derived from him, which men now enjoy, is so far from having any resemblance, that it is entirely inconsistent with it, and is of course destroyed in the same degrees that the Christian life grows up to perfection. This is a matter of the greatest moment, as in effect all the errors and mistakes which have crept into either the theory or practice of Christianity, owe their being to mens not adverting to the true nature of it. And though I should not incline to repeat what has been already said, it must be greatly worth while to have a full and distinct view of it in the light in which the Apostle here sets it. And here,

1. It must be very carefully observed, that this a part of the new creation, distinct entirely, and different from the old, in all the consequences and effects of it. It is so particularly to the Christian himself; as the design of it is, to enter him into the spiritual world as it now subsists in the unchangeable God, who is the very substance of it, “without either variable-
“ness or shadow of turning; from ever-
“lasting to everlasting the same.” This is notwithstanding a world entirely new
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unto the children of Adam, who are as much strangers to it as if it had no being. Something they may have heard about it, as those who live in Christian countries certainly must: but where it is at all regarded, it is but like the reports which we hear of remote countries where we never were, and are never like to be; and tho' we should, yet the places and inhabitants would still be new to us, after all we have heard about them. Now if there was no more to distinguish Christianity from all pretenders and counterfeits, this would do it effectually, that Christians are born into this new world, and thus become new creatures; creatures made for the purpose, every way fitted for the society, the business, the enjoyments, and, in one word, the whole way of living there, to live and enjoy themselves, as spirits should do, in God, and his fulness and all-sufficiency.

But when we say the Christians are a part of the new creation, we mean something further, and very different from this, viz. that they are designed to be the inhabitants of that new world, "the new heavens and new earth," which we look for, according to his promise, when the old,

old, those which now are, shall be destroyed; "when the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burnt up," 2 Pet. iii. 10. *et seqq.* The Apostle there, you will observe, speaks of a sort of scoffers who should come in the last days, and, building on the uninterrupted course of nature, should scoffingly ask, "Where is the promise of his coming?" and gives this as the rise of their folly, that they chuse to be ignorant of what God had from the beginning of the world so solemnly and publicly declared, that the very modern Heathens were not ignorant of it, that this earth once destroyed by water, was reserved to a second and final destruction by fire; of which the destruction of Sodom and the neighbouring cities was a sort of prelude and example. But whether men will mind it or not, the Lord is not slack concerning his promise; the time will certainly come, and when men least look for it.

Possibly some may say, that admitting these things to be so, this is only a renovation

vation of all things, and no proper creation; from which they will readily infer, that the children of Adam need not be new created, but only renewed in their minds; which they think themselves greatly countenanced in by this being an apostolic phrase; and that it is generally allowed, that in regeneration there are no new faculties given, and that those we have, need only to be freed from their natural corruption. These things have been said: and it is much to be wished, that when men say, or take up the sayings of others, they understood what they say. Renovation, if it has any sense at all, is making a thing new which is waxed old, and worn out. In the present case, it is making a new universe after this is destroyed. If they please to say, out of the ruins of this, it will not mend the matter. It will require the same power that created this, to rear up the new one; and when it is done, it will not be this. The inhabitants must be suited to it; and ere they can be so, these bodies at least must be destroyed: and what odds is there between that, and creating man at first out of the dust of the earth? As to the metaphysical

physical jargon of new faculties, and cleansing the old from their natural corruption, what is it they call faculties? Are they any thing but the vital powers the man is possessed of for answering the several purposes of life? And if these are naturally so corrupted, that he who is supposed in possession of them cannot exert them; that is, cannot do what these powers are designed to do; is not this saying, the man has powers, and yet has them not? The most that can be said of man in his natural state is, that he has a capacity of receiving such powers whenever God shall see fit to give him them: and so he would have been if he had no faculties at all. And if we run over all the stations and conditions of man, from paradise down to this time, it will be found, that he neither had, nor could have, such powers as those we are speaking of; that is, such as shall qualify him for the Christian life in the spiritual and eternal worlds; and that there is just as properly a new creation of the soul in regeneration, as there is of the body at the resurrection: The substance is the same; but the life, and all
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the vital powers, as different as the two worlds are; which will, I hope, appear very evident, by the further observations we have to make.

2. The Christian life stands entirely, in the whole, and every part of it, in the free sovereign grace of God; so that there is nothing left for the Christian, but to live and enjoy the provision made for him by his heavenly Father. This, I am aware, will sound very oddly in the ears of those who have employed their whole time and labours to convert religion into a sort of spiritual drudgery; by which they must either earn or maintain their title to eternal life, and recommend themselves to the great sovereign of the universe for a suitable reward. But we must take our measures, not from them, but from the account God himself hath given of it.

And here it is to be minded, that I do not pitch the distinguishing peculiarity of the Christian life, and the constitution of the new creature, in this, that it is founded in grace, the free gift of the creator, without any concurrence or co-operation of the creature at all. That it has in common with every created thing; and we

might say the same of its conservation and subsistence. But even here there is something singular in the new creation, that every step that is taken toward it falls under the creature's observation. And there lies the proper use of the present natural life of mankind, that by the sense and feeling they have of their present being, they can feel themselves dead to the Christian or spiritual life, and can observe, nay, and actually feel, the conception and birth of the new creature, and perceive free sovereign grace in every part; much more still in the preservation and growth of it toward perfection.

And there it is that the singularity of the divine life appears most eminently, that grace runs through the whole of it, from the beginning to the end, in every station and degree of advancement, in the support and sustenance, and all the exercises and actings of it. Adam even in paradise had some employment in the garden, but such as was in some sort analogous to the Christian's; but he had his life in his own hand, and was upon his good behaviour, and therefore could never be perfectly secure against the fears of death.

death. In his fallen state he was bound, as all his posterity are, to eat his bread in the sweat of his brows. But here there is no such thing: the Christian life is of such a nature, that in the very constitution of the new nature, he stands bound as strongly as what we call instinct binds the brute part of the creation to their particular way of living; nay, infinitely more strongly is the Christian bound by his constitution to live purely by grace.

The whole constitution of the new creation, and particularly this part of it, is founded in what we call very justly *the constitution of grace*. This is the rule and measure, or what we may call *the law of the new creation*. It is the grant of eternal life to man; and such are the present circumstances of mankind, that all have been forced to acknowledge, that the making of such a grant was an act of the highest grace. I may not stand to enter into the different apprehensions men have had about the state of this grant, as it is held forth to the world in general; though it would not be hard to show, that it carries, and, by the nature of the thing, the constitution as it stands can carry, no o-

ther condition but this one, that men will take life in the way that God gives it; and that is absolutely necessary whether it was expressed or not. But where it takes effect, and eternal life is given, the grant is so circumstanced, that it must be irrevocable; nay, the very nature of the gift makes it so, otherwise it would not be eternal life. I know what a number of silly things have been said about a conditional grant, and a state of probation, and the necessity of keeping men in fear of hell, to make them careful and diligent in all the exercises and duties of what they call holiness. Had they known the gift of God, and in whose hand the execution of the grant is lodged, they would have found themselves infinitely better secured, and infinitely better security taken against any unrighteous thing entering the new Jerusalem. The grant itself carries not only life abstractly considered, but life provided with all things necessary for its preservation, sustenance, and growth, to its proper perfection, and secured against all events that can possibly happen. And as the fulness of life is lodged in the hands of him who has all power in heaven and earth,

earth, and every soul that is entered there committed to him, to be raised up at the last day, and by him put under the keeping of the Spirit and power of the living God, the very Spirit by which he lives; what room is there left for such insignificant supplements?

But there is another view which puts the matter out of all dispute: By the tenor of the constitution of grace, Christians, that is, every one who is truly entered into Christ, are all of them children of God through him; no more servants but sons; "and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." Thus is the inheritance secured: and though they cannot have life in themselves, they have what is next to it, the nearest a creature can go, a child's, an heir's title; and by the gift that is made them of the spirit of sons, "they cry, Abba, Father;" and look to him for their portion and sustenance, as the child in his father's house does. And now, what have they? what can they have to do there, but to live and enjoy the provision their heavenly Father makes for them? Is this their business? or are they to gad about, under pretext
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of providing better for themselves? or doing something to earn their bread at their Father's hands? The men who can find in their hearts to entertain such imaginations, plainly declare they are slaves, and not sons. Take all the commands of God together, and these, to be sure, take in all duties, they are no more than this one general, to keep close by their Father's house, and to make the best of the provision he has there made for them; or shortly, to live by his grace, and the means which are necessary to their doing so. But,

3. The tenor by which the Christian holds his life, his standing, and all that belongs to it, is absolutely peculiar. I was observing the general tenor, the grant of grace; but it is so qualified, that no one Christian shall hold by it, or have any pretensions in his own right, but by Jesus Christ; by his right, and under him, as the head of the whole body.

We have already observed how he stands in the eternal counsels of God invested with the character of a public person, representing his whole seed, as the first Adam did his in the first creation; receiving and fulfilling the terms of eternal

life

Can receive life eternal only through Christ and by virtue of his merits and not by any merits of their own

life for them : and accordingly receiving, not only the grant of eternal life, but the fulness of it, from the Father's hand, to be conveyed and made over to them in the proper time and way. Upon this obedience of his the grant is founded ; and in this way alone is it lawful for any to claim it. To pretend to life in any other manner, is equivalent to a refusal, and a refusal carrying the most injurious insinuations against the wisdom or goodness of the contrivance ; and that themselves are wiser, and can prescribe what becomes the governor of the universe, and how such a creature as man is ought to be treated, better than he.

It is hardly imaginable how the perverseness of the heart of man can be more glaringly displayed, or carried to a greater height ; as this way is not more different from all other ways of holding life, than it is singular in its excellency, in all the views that can be taken of it. We have had occasion to observe, how precarious all creature-holdings naturally are, and particularly those which stand upon terms and conditions to be performed by such creatures as men are, even in the best estate

state they can be in. The only security is an irreverfible grant by the mere grace of the creator. This is the prefent cafe; but with this fuperadded advantage, that it is eftablifhed on a foundation that ftands ftrong as the Deity itfelf; fealed by the Son of God's obedience unto the death, and further fealed by his refurrection, and the glory that followed, and his entering upon the poffeffion of it, as he has done, with all power and authority both in heaven and earth in his hand; with this exprefs order of heaven, that all men fhould honour him, even as they do the Father. There can be no exception taken againft it but one, that it is below the dignity of the human nature for a man to be obliged to any but himfelf; and even to hold of him who is the head of principalities and powers. But,

4. As this is in truth the higheft honour and dignity man can be exalted to, as well as his only fecurity; fo it is attended with another peculiar diftinguifhing fingularity, which carries the Chriftian's life as high as a creature poffibly can be, and brings him fo near God, that nothing intervenes but Jefus Chrift, the
bond

bond of the union, and the means of communion between him and them, viz. that the Christian life, with all that belongs to it, is not in themselves, but all in Jesus Christ; that as he lives by the Father, they live by him; and by his uniting himself to them, and them to himself, they partake of his Spirit, and live his very life; so that it is not so properly they that live, as He that lives in them, and works all their works in them, as he has wrought all the terms of life for them.

This has been always treated as a most unintelligible mystery by the men of the world; and Nicodemus's question has been put upon it a thousand times over, "How can these things be?" And indeed a mystery to them it must be; and so would the life they now live be, were they as much strangers to it. And indeed such strangers are most men to it, that none of them can say so much as what it is. They know something by experience and feeling what it is to live as they do; but how these things are, they can far less say than the Christian can in the other case. The Christian can say, God is the fountain of life; that he can give his Spirit in what

measure, and in what manner, he sees fit, for answering the purposes which the creature thus formed is designed to answer. He can say, there is no conceivable way how a created spirit which has not, cannot have, life in itself, can live, but by the Spirit of God thus uniting with it: and he can say further, that he has, in the person of Jesus Christ, not only an example, but an illustration and evidence at once, as sensible as the nature of the thing will admit. And if any one will say, how Christ is united to the Father? how his Spirit dwells in him in all his fulness? how the man Jesus lives by the Father, and the Father lives in him? he will find there a full answer to his question, How Christ can live in the Christian? and how the Christian can live by his life? Thus our Lord states the end and design of his unction, and all that followed upon it, John xvii. "That they all may be one, as
" thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee;
" that they also may be one in us." And,
" I have given them the glory which thou
" gavest me; that they may be one, as we
" are one. I in them, and thou in me,
" that they may be made perfect in one."

Words

Words cannot be framed stronger to express the perfection of the Christian state, and that astonishing exaltation of the human nature in Christ Jesus: God is in Christ, Christ is in the Christian; and again, the Christian is in Christ, and Christ in the Father. There is the union between God and them, and an indissoluble peace, and inviolable connection, fixed between God and them, by the mediation of Christ, the great bond of the union. God lives in Christ, Christ lives in the Christian; thus the Spirit of God descends in the same channel. Again, the Christian lives in Christ, by partaking of his Spirit, as Christ lives in the Father, by the fulness of his Spirit abiding in him; and thus God lives in the Christian, and the Christian in him, by the same means, Jesus Christ. And hence,

5. Arises another distinguishing peculiarity in the Christian life, viz. a singular spirit. By spirit, I need not say, we here mean, the immediate result of the Christian's union with Christ, and his Spirit uniting with theirs, in the constitution of the new creature; and which the Apostle very justly calls "the same mind which

“ was in Jesus Christ.” The same views of things, the same sentiments, the same state of the affections and passions ; that is, in one word, a temper and disposition every way such as Christ’s was ; and which will easily appear to be the native and necessary consequence of sharing of his Spirit and life.

As the first office of the promised Spirit is to lead into all truth, John xvi. 13. and that, by taking of Christ’s, and shewing unto them ; so here is laid the foundation of the whole Christian life, on the discovery of the truth and reality, and at the same time of the worth and excellency of eternal and unseen things ; which, of course, discovers the true nature, that is, the vanity and emptiness of such as are present and perishing. The blindness, and consequent error and folly of the children of Adam is cured ; and by seeing things in the same unerring light our Lord did, they are led into the refreshing light of divine wisdom.

It is by these the heart is formed into suitable sentiments, and all the affections and passions duly poised and balanced, under the influence of the Spirit of truth.

They

They value and despise, love and hate, pursue and avoid, things, not by caprice or custom, as the general way of the world is, but on the unerring measures of divine truth; a thing in vain attempted by the greatest masters of morality. Strangers as they were to the system of truth, the weak glimmerings they had of some small twigs of it, were by much too weak to answer any good purpose in minds so strongly biassed to a present world, and susceptible of impressions made on their feeble frame.

It will easily appear, from this state of their sentiments and affections, that the Christian spirit and temper must not only be different from, but directly contrary to, the spirit of this world. Our Lord appeared so on all occasions; and those who are indeed his followers are so much so, that the Apostle tells us, the men of the world wonder what they mean. And indeed there is so much of a mystery in it, that those who are not upon the secret, who cannot enter into their sentiments, think them made up of contradictions. The deepest humility and self-abasement, the most thorough resignation to the divine will,

will, and its native fruit, a chearful acquiescence in whatever Providence lays to their hand, appear to the undiscerning world certain indications of a mean, low, grovelling, spirit, incapable of any high aims or atchievements. But the same principle of truth that makes them so humble and lowly, raises them to the most transcendent greatness of mind. What the men of the world are so mad upon, the pleasures, the power, the crowns and sceptres themselves, the highest prizes, they look upon as greatly below them, and so utterly unworthy of their notice, that none of these things can move them. And at the same time that they are so diffident of themselves, that they will not dare, nor pretend, to stand against the least temptation; yet are they possessed of such exalted courage and resolution, that not all the powers of hell and earth united can frighten them out of their way. The secret of all is, they see that these, and all their power, are but baubles and bugbears, empty appearances, without any solidity. They have infinitely higher aims and prospects; an inheritance perfectly full, secured to them in Christ.

There

Contrast of the two Characters

There they rest; and that sets them above the reach of every creature. They have nothing to be proud of, because they live only by grace; and yet are so sensible of the dignity of their station, that they very justly despise every thing else. And upon the same foundation we might,

6. Proceed to observe the distinguishing singularity of the Christian life, in the whole conduct and duties of it; and even draw out, upon this view of it, as *Christ living in them*, a complete Christian directory, from the first fundamental actions of it in faith, through its immediate fruit, love to God in Christ, extended to all that are in him; and thence through all the duties and exercises of love, in all the branches of righteousness and holiness, leading on the Christian, and landing him in a perfect conformity unto his glorious head; abiding in him, and "walking as he walked." But as we have the life of faith yet before us in the following clause, we shall say no more of it here, but conclude this branch of the subject with reminding you, that to have Christ living in us is the only thing that can make a Christian. Let us therefore study it

it carefully, and never satisfy ourselves, without being sure we are planted into his resurrection as well as his death. And that we never can be, until we find the power and efficacy of his Spirit and life forming us into the same image.

DISSERTATION III.

*And the life which I now live in the flesh,
I live by the faith of the Son of God.*

Hitherto we have considered the Christian life, in relation to the way by which the children of Adam have an entrance into it, by partaking in the sufferings of Christ, and being made conformable unto his death; and also with regard to the distinguishing nature of that life they enter upon, by being made conformable unto his resurrection. But so long as any remnant of Adam hangs about us, particularly these bodies we derive from him, in that close connection they stand with our spirits, the life of Christ can never be perfected in us; which occasions that conflict we find pointed out, and always

ways supposed in the New Testament, between the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh. These make the old and new man, and their respective deeds.

But as the Apostle's rule holds universally, "While one is at home in the body, he is absent from the Lord;" it is in vain to look for the perfection of the Christian life in a present world. The way of living in and out of the body, the distance we are held in from Christ, and the glory of the spiritual world, by that flesh we carry about with us, and the seeing him face to face, must be entirely different.

This is what the Apostle here observes of himself. Though *Christ lived in him*, (and indeed it was only by his living in him that he lived at all, now that he was *crucified with Christ*), yet *he lived this life in the flesh*; that is, in the body he derived from the first Adam; whereby he still continued to have some connection with Adam's world. But though he could not live at present as those will do who shall be raised up with spiritual and incorruptible bodies at Christ's second coming, bo-

dies every way fitted for the world they then enter upon; nor even as the spirits of just men made perfect do, when released from their connections with a present evil world; yet, while he lived in the flesh, and to all outward appearance as other men do, he warred not after the flesh, but acted by an inward unseen principle: *He lived by the faith of the Son of God.*

And as the Apostle places this principle in a double opposition, to *sense* on the one hand, by which natural men live in this world; and to *sight* on the other hand, the way of living in the next; he gives us a good hint, or rather a fair illustration, of the nature of it. Faith is the principle of spiritual activity in the life which the Christian lives in this world; and answers the same purposes precisely that *sense* does in the children of Adam naturally, and that *sight*, or the senses of the new creature perfected by the resurrection, shall do in the world to come. And as these serve mainly, or we may say only, to bring such facts as we have any concern in under our observation, with their circumstances, and relations to other things we are connected with,

with, this leads us to consider faith in the same view. And so the Apostle describes it to us, Heb. xi. 1. "Faith is the evidence of things not seen, and the substance of things hoped for." So our translators render it; and thus the case really stands. The things the Christian has to do with, are either such as though they have a real being, yet are in their nature invisible, and do not fall under the cognisance of any of our senses; and such is the present state of the spiritual world; or such as have no subsistence as yet, but are to be brought into being in their proper time; which will be the state of the new creation when this world shall have an end. Now, faith is the evidence, the demonstration, or what gives the certain assurance, of the truth and reality of the spiritual world, and brings it under our observation and cognisance with as much certainty as if we saw it with our eyes; and though the things of the world to come are only objects of hope, yet faith gives them a subsistence, a real standing in our observation and regard, as much as if they were really present.

It may be said, That our natural life is
 3 B 2 injuriously

injuriously degraded, when it is represented as standing entirely in sense; whereas there is a far more noble principle, that of reason, equally natural to man. It is so indeed; and it is the distinguishing characteristic of the human life, whether we consider the man as in Adam or in Christ; and it has much, we may say altogether, the same province, and answers the same, or analogous, that is, similar purposes, both in the natural and spiritual life. But that is by no means to discover new facts that were not brought under our observation by sense or faith; its sole business is, to improve the notions given by them to the best advantage, and apply them to their proper purposes, which it does in a variety of methods, too many so much as to be enumerated here.

And here it is to be observed, that we have, even in the natural life, subsisting as it does upon sense, a pretty strong image of the Christian's way of living by faith. There are but a few things that fall directly under our observation, confined as we are to a very small spot of earth. It is information, and the report of what other men have observed, that we stand obliged

to

to for by far the greatest part of the facts, or knowledge we have of things; even such as our worldly interests have the greatest dependence on. It is on the faith of these men live and carry on their greatest and most momentous business, which themselves have no experience of, until they try them first on the credit of other men.

It is not refused by any person, that the testimony of God is infinitely greater than that of men; and the thing is so obvious, that it is extremely astonishing to find it so little regarded. But we may lay it down as a general rule, that it will be just as much regarded as God himself is; and whenever the thing comes to be seen as it is, something of Atheism will always be found at the root of infidelity; and that these two always go hand in hand. This, I am aware, will be construed a very uncharitable censure by numbers of men. They have been instructed to delude themselves, very plausibly, with a pretended want of evidence, that the scriptures we have are indeed a divine record. The evidence is as full in the view of reason as the subject can admit of: and one may defy the most fruitful imagination to
pitch

pitch upon any one particular thing that can be added to what we have; unless it be, that the revelation is not made, with all the advantages it has, to every particular person. This will be allowed by men of reason to be a very unreasonable demand; and yet one may venture to say, that even this demand is not so little complied with as is commonly deemed.

We have had occasion oftener than once to observe upon the natural state of mankind, that the mere children of Adam want the Spirit, (the life and powers to discern and apprehend spiritual things), which is only given in Christ Jesus. If this be the case, and every man who attempts it must feel in himself that it is, "That the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned;" such men can be no judges of what is, and what is not a divine testimony: nor is there any way but one of attaining a capacity of judging; namely, that they put themselves under *his* instruction and direction who has the giving of the Spirit. This is the *will* of God, which, as Christ himself hath declared,

declared, whosoever shall be willing to submit to, shall know of his doctrine whether it be of God, John vii. 17. They must therefore act very preposterously, who complain of want of evidence, and yet refuse to put themselves into the only situation in which this evidence is to be seen. It is as much as to say, that they will not believe this to be the record of God, unless some part of it is notoriously false.

This, I am aware, will be looked upon as a very preposterous proceeding by many; that they should comply with the intention of the testimony before they can be sure that it is either true in itself, or the witness of the God of truth: and yet it is no more than men do in numberless cases, where they have not any grounds of assurance comparable to what they have in this case. There are multitudes of instances where there is no way of knowing whether the testimony of weak fallible man is true but by trying; which nevertheless they do without any scruple at all. And yet it may be allowed, that there would have been some colour in the allegation, if our Lord had not proved his divine mission by every evidence that could

could be given of it, and some which would never have entered any man's head to look after; such as, his resurrection from the dead, and sending the Holy Spirit, according to his promise, in so sensible a manner, on his disciples and followers. But, after all, we are assured, that "no man will come to Christ, unless the Father who hath sent him draw him."

This, one will say, is raising a greater difficulty: for if that be the case, it is in vain to attempt putting ourselves in a proper position for seeing the evidence; and "why doth he yet find fault," when he does not draw us, and we cannot come without it? I might observe, in answer to this, that it is not said, no man *can*, but that no man *will*, or does actually, come, unless he is drawn: and if the fault lies in our own will, we have none to blame but ourselves. This indeed is always the case where men do not comply with the divine order; but I dare not say it is the whole case. "Faith is not of ourselves, it is the gift of God;" and in truth as hard a task as to keep the whole law. It is a lesson haughty man wants much to be taught, "that of themselves they can
do

“do nothing;” and yet it is a lesson which even nature itself might teach us, if we would but try what we can do, and be instructed by experience. And if this doth not satisfy us of the absolute necessity of divine assistance, and determine us to deny ourselves, and live solely by grace, we are unfair reasoners, and yet more unfair practitioners. Vain is the pretence of sincerity, and doing what we can, if we do not take all the help that any how can be had.

And thus much of faith in general, justly called the foundation of a Christian life. But the Apostle speaks of it here in a particular view, *the faith of the Son of God*. Not as if that either excluded, or could be separated from faith, in the most comprehensive sense it can be taken in; so far from it, that as the whole record of God centres and unites in Christ, the faith which respects him, that is, which presents him to our observation, necessarily takes in the whole mind of God; which stands all of it very nearly related to him. But the Apostle pitches upon this view, as the most comprehensive, and from which the whole objects of faith derive their life,

their power, and efficacy; and without which they would be so far from answering any purpose, that they would be absolutely unintelligible, and could never approve themselves the oracles of the infinitely wise God.

But there is another reason why the Apostle here pitches upon this view of faith; because hereby it is that the Christian lives by, and we may say, lives upon, the Lord Jesus living in him. It is an answer to a question which might be very pertinently put upon what he had said: How he could say he lived, when in truth it was not he, but Christ that lived in him? It is obviously the same thing, as to all the intents and purposes of life, whether the vital powers he felt in himself, and had all the benefit and enjoyment of, were supported and maintained in him immediately from God, by Christ, or by any other imaginable means, if there were any such. It was by the faith of Christ living in him that he had not only all powers, but the exquisite pleasure of the peculiar honour and advantage of such a life as this is, in all respects the most excellent any creature whatsoever can enjoy.

Two things then lie before us, in discouraging

considering of this so necessary and important subject :

1. How we are to understand the faith of Christ here; and,

2. How the Christian lives by this faith.

I. THE faith of Christ may admit of three different meanings; which yet can occasion no manner of distraction or confusion where they are duly understood, because they mutually suppose and run into one another; and so thoroughly, that no one of them can subsist in the present case without the other. It may denote,

1. Christ's personal faith, as it subsisted, and still subsists, in himself.

2. The record and testimony concerning him, which is to be believed. And,

3. Faith, as it subsists in the Christian, on the belief of the record.

1. We are to consider Christ's personal faith, and how the Christian lives by it; that is, the faith which he had while he lived with men in the world;—and that faithfulness which he still continues possessed of, now that he is exalted in his glory. Both these are to be taken in, as the original word signifies the one as well as

the other; and they are both inseparably connected in him.

That our blessed Lord, while he was upon earth, lived by the same faith of eternal and unseen things, and acted accordingly on these principles with his disciples and followers, cannot be doubted; as this is a considerable, and even a fundamental, part of their conformity unto him, as the pattern which they are formed upon. Large allowances must indeed be made of perfection in him, which they, even the best of them, are but faintly aiming at: He possessed the fulness of that spirit of faith which each of them hath only in his measure; but otherwise he condescended to live and act just as other men do; being in all things, except sin, made perfectly like his brethren.

But that which we have peculiarly in our eye when we speak of the Christian's living by the faith of Christ, is that which was peculiarly his, in his public character, undertaking, and fulfilling the terms of eternal life; that faith in God, and his promises in the everlasting covenant; the kingdom therein secured to him, with all that belongs to the frame
and

and constitution of it. It was in the strength of this faith that he “ became
“ obedient even unto the death; and for
“ the joy that was set before him, endu-
“ red the cross, despising the shame, and
“ is set down at the right hand of the
“ Majesty on high.”

This faith of his all Christians are very nearly concerned in, as there the foundation of all their hopes is laid; because there were laid the foundations on which the grant of eternal life is firmly and irrevocably established in that kingdom of his which cannot be moved. What was there secured to him, as the reward of his obedience of faith, and the glory he brought to his heavenly Father thereby, becomes, in the virtue thereof, a gift of grace to them: for this is the record, “ That God
“ hath given to us eternal life, and this life
“ is in his Son;” so that it is as impossible it can fail, as that the promise of God to his own Son can. Thus far then all Christians live by his faith, as he has thereby obtained for them an unalienable right of subjects in his eternal kingdom, on the same security by which the kingdom is secured to himself;

himself; so that if he lives and reigns, they must also live under him.

But it is not a bare security he has by his faith obtained for his disciples and followers; though the bare promise of a faithful God is as good as any creature can desire; much more when ratified in so solemn a manner, and connected so inseparably with the kingdom and glory of Christ. But it does not stop even here: Our Lord, the Christian's head and representative, has the kingdom put into his hand; and in their name, as well as his own, has taken possession of all the fulness and necessary provision for eternal life. He stands possessed of all the fulness of God, his Spirit, and his power; and has all that life in himself which ever any of them shall have occasion for throughout all the ages of eternity.

And all this secured unto them by his inviolable faithfulness, tried in the severest manner, and approved to such a degree, that the faithfulness of Moses, though attested by him that cannot misjudge, was in no wise comparable to it. And this is the other sense of the faith of Christ we observed, and which continues,
and

and will do, for ever inviolable. And thus the Christian lives by the faith of Christ, considered as subsisting in *him*; the faith which he acted by in his great undertaking, and the faithfulness which is essential to him in his exalted state. There the foundations of the Christian life are laid so deep and strong, "that the gates of hell cannot prevail against it."

And this at once is the pattern and foundation of all that faith which is acted by the Christian himself, on all the occasions and exigencies of the Christian life. But,

2. We are to consider the faith of Christ which the Christian lives by, as it may signify that which is to be believed concerning him, viz. the record which God has made, and the testimony he has given concerning his Son. Thus we find mention frequently made of "the faith delivered to the saints;" "of preaching the faith;" continuing in, and denying or erring from it; so frequently, that there can be no question about it. See Acts xxiv. 24.; Gal. i. 23.; 1 Tim. iv. 1.; v. 8.; and vi. 10. &c. And as the record is expressly designed to set forth Christ, to bring him under our observation,

tion, in his person and character, the ends and purposes he is designed to answer, and how every way fit he is to answer them all, his faith, especially the heroic exercise of it in the most trying cases, the success and fruits of it, as we were just now hinting them; it may justly be said, that he is the great, and in effect the only subject of the whole; nor is there any thing there which does not some how or other relate to him. This is the great subject of the Christian's faith; it is what he believes; the facts on which he builds the whole of his conduct: and standing thus so closely connected with faith as it subsists in Christ, we cannot consider them separately. And therefore, without insisting on it at all in this separate view, we proceed,

3. To consider the faith by which the Christian lives, as it subsists in, and is acted by himself; a point one should think not at all hard to adjust, when we once know what we are to believe concerning him. When God speaks to man in words commonly used among them, there is all the reason in the world to think they are used in the same sense, unless there be a very express intimation of the

the contrary ; and yet, I know not how, by the learned labours of such as have handled this subject, faith is become, in the apprehension of multitudes, so abstruse a thing, and hard to be understood, that it is not thought possible for ordinary Christians to make any thing of it. And thus it fares in all cases where men undertake to give minute philosophical definitions of what can only be known by sense or feeling. The simplest of mankind know, or rather feel, what it is to believe or not believe, better than the acuteest philosopher ever was or can be able either to describe or define it. The difficulty, if there be any, must arise from what is the object of faith, or the thing to be believed ; and when this is agreed, the only way to speak intelligibly, is to have recourse to mens experience, observation, and feeling, in common cases ; and thence it will be very easy to set all the views of the Christian faith, in its nature, exercise, and consequences, in an easy and familiar light.

Something of this kind we have already attempted in the general view we were giving of the Christian's faith, and need

only accommodate what was there observed to the faith of Christ, with this single observation, That though faith, and believing, are for the most part promiscuously used in our language, as importing the same thing, and are indeed very nearly related; yet faith very commonly expresses something beyond bare believing, but which is yet a natural and necessary consequence of it. Thus we are said, very properly, to believe both a fact duly attested, and a promise when duly circumstanced; but when we would express the trust and confidence we have in the promiser, though, in truth, it is no more than believing he will do as he has said, we rather express it by faith in him.

And this leads us to consider the Christian faith, as it is commonly expressed in the sacred books, the faith of Christ, or faith in Christ, in the relation which it must bear to the record, and the testimony which we have there concerning him: There we must look for the foundation of all the several names, descriptions, and expressions, that are applied to it; which are indeed many, and give different views of faith, but still it is the same thing at bot-

tom: and all these are founded on the several parts of the divine record, and the different views that are there given of Christ. And here,

We need not stand much on the general, which is the foundation of all the rest, viz. the view which is there given us of Jesus Christ; who he is; what place he holds in the universe, and particularly in relation to man; his personal excellency; his birth, life, death, resurrection, and the glory that has followed; his present state; and what we have to expect at his second appearance, and the full manifestation of his glory. It is by these accounts we have him brought under our observation; and by believing what we have thus attested concerning him, we are enabled, at least a foundation is laid, for enabling us to form a proper judgement concerning him; his personal excellency and worth; how he is to be esteemed and valued; and how far we have any concern with him in his public character; and what we have to hope or fear from him.

I need not observe, how this is the only means we have, in our present state, of

being acquainted with him. Before he made his appearance among men, those who were most concerned in him, and longed most for his coming, the men who had the promises, could have no more than a very imperfect knowledge of him. When he appeared in the flesh, those who ought to have known him best were most mistaken about him; and now that he is returned to the Father, he is as remote from sensible observation as before he came in the flesh, or indeed as God himself is. And yet we have no reason to complain, when both the Father and the Son are so fully manifested by the works done by them, which we have clearly recorded, and full instructions given us how we are to improve them to the best advantage. The historians give us the facts; and the prophets and apostles teach us at large what use we are to make of them. Had it not been for the facts, no instructions could have been found level to our capacities: and had we been left with the bare facts, they had either passed by unobserved, or neglected, by the greater part of mankind. But by the unerring reasonings on these, by the inspired

red writers, and the consequences deduced from them, we are taught how to reason upon them likewise; and thereby have as much the benefit of them, and more than if we had seen them with our own eyes, where-ever the record is received, and really believed.

This is so easy and plain a view of the Christian faith, that it is hard to conceive how men should mistake it; and many have imagined, that it was not for want of faith, but something else, that the practice of those who are called Christians comes so far short of what their principles seem necessarily to lead to. And yet, when one considers how necessarily the belief of these influence the practice, where they are really believed, one cannot help thinking, that the defect must lie here; and when the thing is duly considered, it will appear, that multitudes, even of those who think themselves very good believers, mistake something for faith, which falls in all respects greatly short of it.

It is evident, that the greatest numbers of those who have appeared of late in defence of Christianity, against the attacks of infidels, and those who very unjustly apply

ply the name of freethinkers to themselves; resolve the whole of Christianity into one general principle, That the scriptures are the word of God; while there is hardly one distinguishing principle of it which is not given up by one or other of them: and many have gone so far as to assert roundly, that Christianity is no more but a republication of what they call the law of nature. All beyond that goes for mystery: and the bold maxim of one of them is swallowed down with applause by the party, *That where mystery begins, religion ends.* Upon this is founded a loose general implicit faith, that the record is true; while they are as ignorant of the contents of it, and as unconcerned about the most important of them, as the remotest inhabitants of Japan, or of the unknown wilds of America. What monstrous folly is it to imagine that this has any resemblance of the Christian faith; any more than that of the blind bigotted Papist, who pleases himself with believing as the church believes, without knowing a tittle of her creed?

Near of kin to this is that loose, heedless belief, which those who live among Christians

Christians naturally fall into, as they take up the other fashions and customs of the place where they happen to be born, and of the people they live among. It is a part of the course of the world, and they do but suffer themselves to be carried down the stream. In this way one may come to know a great deal about Christ, what Christians say of him, and even what the Bible says; but they cannot so properly be said to believe, as not to disbelieve. They read perhaps the story of Christ, as they do that of a fabulous hero, though seldom with half the pleasure; they go to church with their neighbours, and join in the worship there: and they may go yet farther in a form of godliness, just as they wear their cloaths in such or such a fashion, without troubling themselves with any further thought about it, than that their neighbours do so.

Since Christians came to split among themselves into so many divisions and subdivisions as we have seen, especially in these latter times; since implicit faith, the great bond of union in the Romish church, came to be so universally decried; this customary belief very often degenerates into
what

what we may call *party-faith*; and as they who are very superficial, may yet footh themselves into a belief that they are very good Christians, they may at last come to be very serious in their way: and, of all mankind, such are the fittest to become bigotted, and even furious zealots, for the party they have taken a fancy to. As they are strangers to the spirit and power of godliness, they know no standard of Christianity but orthodoxy; and as they are generally too incapable, and too lazy, to draw their principles from the scriptures of truth, the only standard of right believing is the sense of the party; by which they are buried in a superstitious regard for every trifle their leaders have made any how a part or a pendicle of their system; and that so deep, that all reasoning is thrown away upon them, and nothing but divine power can reclaim them.

In direct opposition to these stand a set of men, who have made themselves very remarkable by their high pretensions to unbiaſſed freedom of thought, and refuse to be determined by any authority whatever, until they see reason for what they do. They would indeed be excellent spirits,

rits, did they keep up to their profession. But, unhappily for themselves, and such as have the misfortune to fall under their influence, they abuse reason, by putting it to an employment it was never designed for; to discover facts which lie without their observation, instead of judging of, and improving to their proper purposes, such as are made known to them: and instead of reason, they make their own preconceived apprehensions of things the measure and standard of their faith; so that nothing shall pass for truth, even upon the authority of God himself, unless it be agreeable to what they have thought fit to call the eternal and unchangeable nature and reason of things: I say, what they call so; for surely the thing itself, the real nature and reason of things, lies as much out of their reach as the wisdom of the great creator does. These mens belief then, if they have any, it is evident, can be neither faith nor reason, but a system of imaginations, formed upon the imperfect and weak observations which they were capable of making.

Too nearly related to this is that called *rational Christianity*, so much talked of

among our fashionable writers. I will take no further notice of those, who, professing to acknowledge the record as divine, yet fall so entirely in with those who deny it, as to receive nothing upon that authority, until they have tried it by another test, and found it, what they call, worthy of God; by which means they have thrown Christ and his Spirit quite out of Christianity, with an impudence of boldness greatly beyond that of a professed infidel. It is another more consistent species of them I have to observe upon, who will readily acknowledge the record as it stands; but must first be satisfied that it is divine, upon what they call rational grounds; that is, such evidence as every thinking man may have by his mere natural powers, without any assistance from the Spirit of Christ. And thus they say, revealed religion is founded on what they call natural; and that one must believe there is a God, and that this is his word, before they can lay any stress upon it as such. I will not resume what I had occasion to say on this subject before; nor stand any further upon it than just to observe, that if the Bible be true, this will

be a most effectual method to keep men from ever believing it; for this plain reason, that it is by faith, and by faith only, we can know, that the worlds were created by the word of God; and until that principle is established, we have no *data* whatever to reason upon. But were the thing possible, the ultimate ground of our belief would not be the authority of God, but human reasoning; and that might bring some philosophical knowledge, which, perhaps, might make a man to be of the Christian *opinion*, a poor loose wavering thing, which could never bear such a superstructure as the Christian life: and sadly verified it is in the lives of such, exactly described by our Saviour in his parable of the sower. And as men, generally speaking, suit their systems to their own experiences; from this unsound root we may derive all the Pelagian refinements that ever have appeared in the world, from the first broacher, down to the loose philosophical religion of the present age.

And here I cannot help observing, what has often been objected, and never was nor ever will be answered, viz. the insuperable difficulty which attends this way of religion,

gion, so insuperable that it renders the Christian faith impracticable to the bulk of mankind, who neither are, nor can be philosophers, nor capable of conceiving these learned, and most of them very intricate and laborious reasonings, by which the being, and much more the attributes of God, are pretended to be demonstrated: and which is yet worse, it appears directly contrary to plain fact, the experience of the whole Christian world; where we find the account the Apostle gives of it verified to a tittle, “Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called. But God hath chosen the foolish of the world to confound the wise; the weak to confound the strong; and things that are not to bring to nought things that are.

Not as if the faith of Christ were not both a *rational* and a *natural* thing, taking these words to express what is agreeable to the true nature and order, or, as we call it, the constitution of things as God has established it. It is in the strictest propriety both, however mistaken it has been. It is *natural* for God to create, and the creature to be created, and to receive its life,

life, and all its powers and capacities, from him, “from whom comes every “good and perfect gift;” it is natural and *rational* to live entirely by his grace, and in that way which he has appointed; and to attempt any other way is irrational, it is unnatural and fantastical. What can be more so, than for men to pretend to make themselves; to work up the low powers they have by their first creation to those which belong only to a second? Such is faith; it is the way by which the children of Adam created again in Christ Jesus live. Thus the Apostle brands the foolish device, when he says, “His speech “and his preaching was not with the “persuasive words of human wisdom;” though no body will say it was for want of skill, that knows any thing of him; “but in demonstration of the Spirit and “power;” and that for a very special reason, “that their faith should not stand “in the wisdom of man, but in the power “of God:” A foundation greatly more agreeable to the whole plan of creation, where no creature can have any thing but what it has received.

The Christian’s faith, then, must be conceived

ceived of as that spiritual perceptive power in the new creature, by which he actually perceives the Lord Jesus Christ in that spiritual, rational light, in which the Spirit of God has set him forth in the holy scriptures, the only rule and measure of our belief; and which gives an answerable experience, and inward spiritual sense, of the truth and reality of what is there attested concerning him; such as no man can possibly have any notion of but such as have the same experience, any more than a blind man can perceive the light of this world, or form any notion how material objects are perceived by it.

From this account of the faith of Christ some ignorant presuming men have suffered themselves to be deluded into a notion, that they were honoured with visions and revelations, and inspired with the divine Spirit, as the prophets were. But madness, or an over-heated fancy, is not faith. This rests soberly in the mind of God, revealed in the scriptures, and never seeks to be wise above what is written; the measure of wisdom which our gracious God has laid ready in his Son. Whatever pretends to rise higher, or reach farther,

farther, we are sure has not, cannot have the Spirit of God.

And hence we may be directed how to take our measures of the Christian's faith, so as to have it distinguished from all counterfeits, that we may not suffer ourselves to be imposed on with deceitful appearances. The holy scriptures are the rule; and the views which are there given of Christ are those which faith gives, and these it must come up to. Whatever either goes beyond or stops short in any respect, is either groundless presumption, or at least some degree of unbelief. But as this is of peculiar use to the Christian, we shall consider the views of Christ somewhat distinctly, as faith presents him to our observation, from the account made of him in the divine record, both in their general nature, and in the particular purposes the several views answer to the Christian in the life of faith.

As to the general nature of the faith of Christ, or belief of the record concerning him, it may be worth while to observe the few following inseparable properties of it.

1. The views of faith are all of them true

true and real, founded in the account God has given of his Son, unmixed with any fanciful imaginations of our own. Never was there a more sacred subject, that is, one where trifling was less allowable, or more dangerous; where no less than the sacred character of the Son of God is so deeply concerned; the character of him whom the Father hath sealed, and sent into the world, and that upon the most important and serious business, with express assurances, that no man knows him, nor can know him, any further than he has manifested him.

And yet no where have men more indulged the licentiousness of imagination, both in the first and latter ages; while they have presumed to say, not only without record, but in opposition to the plain words, what he is and is not, what he has and has not done; nay, what he must be, and what purposes, and no other, he has answered, and designed to answer: and as there is no end of whimsical imaginations, there has not been one single point, relating either to his person or offices, but it has either been denied or explained away. No wonder if such unhallowed

hallowed boldness is punished with infatuation, and what the Apostle calls a *reprobate sense*. All these things faith gives satisfaction in; but gives it upon a sober and satisfying foundation; the testimony of him that sent him into the world, the same with his own. And as the testimony is true, so are the apprehensions and conceptions which faith forms upon the credit of it; and that with infinitely greater certainty than ever they could have been made out by personal observation, with the assistance of all the learning and wisdom the world could furnish out. But,

2. That the views of faith may answer the record, they must extend as far as that does, and be every way adequate to it, without overlooking any particular which constitutes the character of Christ, or even any circumstance which is recorded to illustrate it. It is in the nature of divine faith to copy exactly: and there is good reason for doing so, because we are sure the original is perfect; there is neither defect nor superfluity, nothing left to pick and chuse on. He himself never either did or said a needless thing; and

surely nothing divine wisdom has seen fit to record can be construed such. All partial views of him are so far wrong ones; something is wanting to make out the perfection of beauty, and something that we have occasion for. It was on this account that the Apostle "determined to know "nothing but Jesus Christ," and "count-
"ed all things but loss and dung for the
"excellency" of that knowledge: and every true Christian is of the same temper; because in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. And,

3. Faith's views must be distinct and orderly; every thing must lie in the mind just as it does in the record, if we propose to make the proper advantage of them. To make a just picture, the same symmetry of parts and features must be preserved that is in the original. The Apostle gives us an exquisite view of this, where he presents the record, the form of saving words, as a mould into which the true Christian is cast, and moulded into an exact conformity unto it; so as to bear the impression not only of the figure and shape, but of every line and particular draught which is there. This is the work
of

of faith; and nothing but a perfect faith can do it perfectly. The gospel-record is of vast compass: it takes in both God and man, time and eternity; and indeed every thing, both in the old and new creation, we have any concern with. The weakness even of the renewed mind cannot take in the whole; it must be done by parts. And the all-wise author of the record has condescended to our weakness in the gradual revelation he has there made of his Son; where one scene so prepares for and introduces another, that one can never see him distinctly, nor to advantage, but by beginning where he begins. He has condescended further to provide a variety of images, to help our conceptions, and raise our apprehensions, some taken from nature, and the state of things among men; and where these failed, appointing and instituting ordinances made for the purpose, as we observed before. But to keep all these in their proper place, and to lay them together, as the truth is in Jesus, so as to make up the entire and regular view; that is, the business of faith, and what may employ, fully employ, the longest life ever a Christian lived.

ved. And better employed surely no man can be, either in point of interest or honour. Broken disjointed views misrepresent the great object of faith, and that is the main occasion of all the miscarriages of Christians.

4. The views faith gives of Christ must be strong and lively to affect the heart, and bear the great weight which lies upon it in the Christian life. Faint views make faint impressions, and quickly wear out; like those who received the word with joy, but when trouble came, all was over. And indeed there lies the difference, not only between a true and a false, but likewise between a strong and a weak faith. Abraham is commended, that he did not so much as stagger at the promise: that would have been so much of unbelief, as indeed every degree of doubting and wavering is. The foundation of God stands sure and stedfast; his faithfulness cannot fail, nor any word of his fall to the ground. Nor indeed is it possible that the Christian can in the least waver in his views, unless he lose sight, either of the record he has to build on, or of him who is the author of it. All are agreed on this point:

point: so much faith as there is, so much assurance. The strength of faith is always attended with an answerable proportion of liveliness, both in the perception, and in the impression it makes on the soul; and both are from the same cause, the strength and vigour of the spiritual life, supported and maintained by the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. When this life languishes, so, of course, do all the actings and exercises of it, and faith in a special manner; which, as it is the first and fundamental exertion and acting of life, stands inseparably connected with it. They mutually depend upon and influence each other. Where Christ is seen as he stands in the divine record, eternal and unseen things appear with such affecting power, as forms the heart upon them, and “changes the soul into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” And,

5. This is the last thing we have to observe, as a distinguishing character of the faith of Christ: Its power and efficacy on the hearts and spirits of men for answering all the great purposes of the spiritual life,

life, both for preserving and maintaining it, and raising the possessors of it to a conformity unto their glorious head. And as it is in this view that the Christian *lives by the faith of the Son of God*, it will deserve our most serious and attentive consideration.

And I know no better way of illustrating this part of the subject than by taking the record as it lies before us, and the particular views which we have there given us of Christ, and shewing how the belief of them naturally should influence and form the hearts of men, and will certainly influence those of Christians. To do this fully would be indeed to compose a system of practical Christianity, and would furnish matter enough for more than one volume. We can therefore propose no more than to touch on the general heads of things, with such hints as may lead the serious observer into the road of further discoveries. And,

1. Here it will be proper to begin with what is the foundation of all the rest, the consideration of his person and personal character.

This,

This, it is easy to see, must take in a very large compass, when we consider him as he is neither man simply, nor only God, but both united: nor yet as a man barely assumed into such an union with God, as an ordinary creature may be, and all true Christians really are; but the divine and human natures so united, that the manhood, however continuing perfectly distinct, yet does not, cannot subsist a moment separated from the Deity. It is very hard to speak intelligibly on so sublime a subject, which we have good ground to believe has no parallel in the whole compass of the universe; and yet when we consider how entirely a creature, a Christian man for instance, may be under the influence and leading of the divine Spirit, that is, how closely and intimately the great creator can unite himself to his own creature, one would think it should not be hard, by these steps, to carry up our apprehensions and conceptions to a perfect and effectual union; that is, to conceive a man whose essential character it should be, to subsist no other way than in perfect union with the Father of spirits. In that case, his essence will lie in that
very

very union, or rather oneness, with God, I may not here digress so far as would be necessary, to bring into any thing of a distinct view, *that* union upon which *this* is formed, of the eternal Father, Word, and Spirit, subsisting in the divine essence; three plainly distinguished by personal properties and distinct agencies, and yet so subsisting and acting in and by one another, that they are, in the most proper sense that can be, *one* being: nor how the second of these assumes the human nature, and unites it to himself; which we have represented in the record, both by such words and emblems as the language of man can express, or his apprehensions reach, in what is so greatly above him.

However, we are hereby led to conceive of Christ as a man, one of the same kind with ourselves, and a brother by nature and birth; but such a man as there was never another so highly honoured of God, and brought so very near him. And those who have their natural Atheism in any degree cured, must, on this single account, conceive the highest esteem and veneration for him; which must rise on every advance that is made toward more
assured

assured and confirmed conceptions of this his essential dignity and glory, by those numberless methods God has taken to set him forth as his beloved Son, crowned with all the pre-eminency and glory that belongs to "the first born of every creature;" which we will not here stand so much as to enumerate, but leave them, from the first mention of him in paradise, with distinguished honour, through all the subsequent manifestations made to the patriarchs, Moses, and the prophets, to the time that he was "declared to be the Son of God with power, by his resurrection from the dead," and the evidence finished by sending the promised Spirit upon his disciples and followers.

Were we left to build upon this foundation, even without any further assistance, we should naturally expect to find in him perfections of every kind carried as far as they could go. We should expect more, to have them all found in him in an infinitely higher degree than we can either imagine or conceive; because we must conceive "all the fulness of the Godhead," and consequently all the fulness of divine perfection, dwelling in him. Neither are we disappointed in these expectations by the

assistance afforded us in the record, where we have an account of the discoveries made of those perfections in his conduct and achievements; those astonishing displays of divine power, in the mighty works done by him, even when he appeared at the lowest in this world: for though he gave himself to be despised and rejected of men, and condescended even to lay down his life; yet nothing can be more evident, than that all this was not for want of power; for at the same time he created food for the multitudes that followed him, commanded the winds and seas, diseases, devils, and death itself, that ungovernable enemy of man; and what is as remarkable as any thing, he could bring the men who came to apprehend him to the ground, by asking a simple question, which could be no surprise to them on such an occasion. But when we add to these the mighty things he did through the Old-Testament administration, and the yet greater after his resurrection, and compare them with the general testimony given him of the Father, of his being perfectly well pleased, or rather perfectly delighted in him; we can have no room left to doubt of

of every other perfection being in proportion to his power. As these views rise higher and higher the more one comes to be acquainted with him, the more will their esteem rise, and the higher their veneration, until they come up to the standard, the will of God, "that all men should honour the Son even as they do the Father."

I need but just mention after this, (what is the native consequence of his so near relation to God), the high station he holds in the universe, and the regard that is shown him by every creature that is capable of perceiving his glory. And what creature capable of observing one so highly exalted of God can miss to do it; especially after the sovereign command, that all the angels of God should worship him? The devils themselves, rebels as they are, yet cringed before him, and made their supplications to him as their sovereign, when he appeared at the lowest. But we must proceed,

2. To consider him in his public character, as he is set forth at great length in the same record.

I was saying, how great excellency and

personal worth was to be expected from the astonishing union of God and man. We have the same reason to expect some very astonishing purposes to be answered by this union. Great things indeed we find spoken of the place our Lord held in the first creation, and still holds at the head of principalities and powers. But it is the new creation that we have represented to us as his spiritual province, and the children of men there, that church of which he is constituted the glorious head. He has indeed all power in heaven and in earth lodged in his hand; but his peculiar business is to be mediator between God and man. Having said so much on this subject in the former part, I shall neither resume, nor add to it here, any further than to take notice of that abridgement of it himself gives us, John xiv. 6. "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

This is a very interesting view to the children of men; and cannot fail, where it is believed indeed, to produce in the heart corresponding sentiments and affections. The way of obtaining the divine
favour

favour could never have entered into the hearts of men. Something we find them groping after in the midst of the most Heathenish darkness; and in their priests, their sacrifices, and their mediator gods and heroes, we can trace some vestiges of truth miserably mangled by tradition: and even these, mangled as they were, were so far regarded, that no man durst trust his own integrity without them; that refinement was reserved for greater ignorance in more enlightened times. But when the truth appears as it is in Jesus, this great and only ordinance of God, for making and keeping peace between him and man, sets aside every thing else, and puts an end to all the foolish hopes and expectations of men by any other means.

This is a great point gained, as those will acknowledge it to be, who have felt in themselves, or observed in others, the mischievous consequences of leaning to such means for obtaining the favour of God, and how hard it is to draw off the biassed heart, as all mens naturally are, from these dead hopes. But, even in this general view, there is another kind of prospect opened than the children of Adam ever could propose in the confused
general

general notions of the divine favour they aimed at. What lies nearest their heart is, success in their worldly affairs, and to be kept free from those evils to which they are exposed in their present state. Those who live among Christians have learned to be afraid of hell and the devil, and to be kept from these is the utmost of their wishes. But their notions of immortality and an after state are dark and confused. It is in Christ Jesus only, as he stands at the head of the new world, that life and immortality are brought to light; and believers, those who see him, are enabled to see distinctly into futurity, and the glory and happiness of the world to come. They see a hell indeed, a place of torment; but the torment there is not the only, nor indeed the main thing they have to fear. There is something in the prospect of being ever with the Lord, of beholding his glory, of being made like him, the perfection of the blessed inhabitants, of inheriting his kingdom, and being crowned with his glory, that engages the heart so thoroughly, that it is the perfection of torment to be separated and divided from him for ever.

To

To be separated and divided from Christ is, at the same time, to be separated from God, the fountain of life, light, and comfort. And it is to be observed, that Christ and the Father are never divided in the right believer's views, as they are never separated in the record, and cannot possibly be in themselves. This raises faith's views yet higher, and gives yet more endearing apprehensions of the excellency and glory of the new creation. The nearness the happy inhabitants are admitted, not only to Christ, but through him to God, and his all-sufficient fulness, constitutes the true dignity and glory of the human nature; and being made the objects of his dearest and most unchangeable love, renders them completely and eternally happy.

Had we been left with this general view of the divine constitution, Jesus Christ set up at the head of a new creation, a new world to be reared up by him, and the inhabitants whereof were to be formed out of the present race of mankind; it would be hard to say what sentiments, what workings of the heart between hopes and fears, and what anxiety and concern must have been

been occasioned by such a prospect: and they only can be able to say, who have been kept, for some considerable time, on these general views, without any more particular application. But, even in this case, they stand not properly alone. For,

3. Our Lord's public character, the place he holds, and the offices he bears, are not, in the record, and cannot be, in the views of faith, separated from his conduct and management in the execution of them.

What those offices are which constitute his public character, we have in some sort already declared, as they are at large unfolded in the divine record, with all the advantage, and condescension, that divine wisdom found proper for conveying them to the understanding of such low beings as men are. But all these declarations, and all the natural and instituted emblems, figures, and representations; the temporal saviours and deliverers from time to time raised up, with circumstances appropriated to the purpose; with all the anointed prophets, priests, intercessors, and kings, raised up from time to time, with the same sort of circumstances,

ces, would have given us but an imperfect view, had not the Sun of righteousness risen upon mankind, with life, light, and healing, in his wings, and shown himself, by his achievements, to be the great prophet, mediator, and intercessor, the sovereign Lord and King in the new Jerusalem. It is in these offices, but especially in his manner of executing them, that he stands not only in an interesting, but very endearing light to the children of Adam.

It is very evident, that all these offices respect them, and that it is with them his business lies. It is from among them that the inhabitants of the new Jerusalem, his new world, are to be gathered. But the record has no where said, that all the children of Adam shall have this privilege: it says the contrary very expressly, and the event is answerable. He is indeed a prophet, a priest, and a king; he is a saviour and deliverer to mankind, a mediator between God and them: but he is sovereign in them all, as God his Father is, from whom he has his instructions, and which, we are sure, he very punctually follows. He has done so much, that we are sure

he is able "to save to the uttermost:" such is his power, such the value of his all-sufficient sacrifice, and the worth of his intercession, that there is no sin so great, or so greatly aggravated, as to be beyond the reach of his merit, nor any sinner so obdurate as to exceed the bounds of his power. There is no room then left for despair; but still there is as little ground of certainty to any. When they see, indeed, that he hath done all things well, they cannot but love him, and wish themselves under his care; but, after all, anxiety and distress must continue, until they see access for themselves, in particular, to claim the benefit of all that he hath done.

This distress, it is true, is much alleviated, when, to the great things he hath done, we add his endearing manner of doing them. Every body knows, that, in the greatest actions, the manner is as much minded as the thing itself, and generally affects us more; and indeed it is in the circumstances chiefly, that the merit lies, and the same action may be either great or little, generous or selfish, and accordingly

cordingly pleasing or disagreeable, as it is managed.

It is the great commendation of our great Redeemer, that he could have nothing of selfish or interested views in his undertaking, any more than God could have in creating the world. The whole intention of it was for the benefit of mankind; they reap all the advantage, and nothing remains to him but the generous and amiable pleasure of doing good. The glory arising from it is nothing to him, because no part of his happiness depends on it. And when it is considered what great things he did, how low he stooped, how he pleased not, minded not himself, and devoted himself entirely, his very life and soul, to the service of man; how resolutely, and with the true spirit of a disinterested hero, he gave himself a ransom for the perishing sons of Adam; how he triumphed over death and hell, at the very time he seemed to be overcome by them, making a show of them openly on that cross by which they thought to destroy him; how he retains the same tenderness and affection in the affluence of glory and honour he is entered upon the

possession of; and that his very enjoyment of them lies in communicating these his unexhaustible treasures to his poor brethren, whom he has condescended to make such by becoming one of them: when we consider all this, how amiable must he appear? These are very faint sketches of his perfect beauty, but such as, however carefully studied, can no more be perfectly apprehended, than that love of his from which they flowed.

In these views of faith, and the impression they make upon the heart, the sentiments, affections, and passions, peculiar to the Christian life, are further formed and carried on. The man comes to be more and more pleased with Christ, and, in the same proportion, reconciled to God; more and more mortified to the world, and all relations and interests inconsistent with Christ, and his way of saving and giving eternal life: the soul is drawn out after him, counts them happy beyond expression whom he has chosen and called, and nothing will satisfy it without him. But still uncertainty and anxiety mars his pleasure; he finds no ground for despair, yet reckons it presumption

sumption to hope until he is led forward.

4. To consider the record, as it contains a perfect warrant to every soul that will, to apply to him, and make use of him as their Saviour in particular.

The great ground of this warrant is, the provision God has made in him of eternal life, and the gift held forth in common unto the children of men. This is the account the Apostle gives of the record; which whosoever believes not, hath made God a liar: 1 John v. 10. 11. "And this is the record, that God hath given unto us eternal life: and this life is in his Son." And as this is a point of the utmost moment, and as the life, as well as the peace and comfort, of the Christian depends almost wholly upon it, it has employed the thoughts and pens of almost every one who has thought or written at all on these subjects. And it had been much to be wished, that men had consulted the record more, and indulged their own apprehensions and experiences less, in these matters.

As the Apostle states it, and he certainly understood it, the gift is full and free, and under no manner of limitation but

but one, if it may be called one, that "this life is in his Son;" whence it unavoidably follows, "That he who hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life." But indeed this is no limitation at all, if it be duly understood. So far from it, that by eternal life being lodged in Jesus Christ, as it is for the behoof of mankind, it is not only given, but so far actually secured for them, and conveyed to them. And this, of all things that could be imagined, is what makes such a surprising thing as this is, not only most credible, but affords the strongest confirmation of it that could possibly be devised. That there is indeed such a thing as eternal life, cannot be doubted by any who believes that Christ is in possession of it; and as it is in his public character as mediator, and particularly as a trustee for both parties, that he is entered on the possession of it, it can be as little doubted that it is designed for man; and that the promise and gift of it is true and real, such as cannot miss of its effects, but by refusal or neglect, which are in effect the same thing.

But

But such is the weakness, and, I must add, the perverseness of the human mind, in our present low state, that this highest security, on which our faith and hope should be established with a proportional firmness, is strangely misimproved unto the great occasion of perplexity and confusion. "He that hath the Son, hath life;" that is unquestionably true: but it is equally true, "he that hath not the Son, hath not life." How then shall we have him? and how shall we know whether we have him or not? And until we know we have him, how can we believe, that God hath given to us eternal life? especially when we are told, that there is an eternal unchangeable election made by the eternal God, of the particular persons who are given to Christ; that for these he died, and for these, and no others, he intercedes; and consequently, that to these alone he must be given, and they only can have him. Thus, by drawing in what it is impossible for any man to be resolved about, faith is at a stand, and the whole business of eternal life along with it.

"We must not speak wickedly even for
"God,"

God," much less for ourselves: whatever difficulties we find ourselves or our friends involved in, we must not presume either to vitiate or explain away any part of the record; as I am very certain those do, who will not allow of any election of persons, but such as is made in time, according to the qualities and previous dispositions of the persons chosen to eternal life; or that Christ redeemed, and died for one more than another: or who affirm, that the gift of eternal life is common equally to all mankind, and only limited by certain conditions, viz. faith and repentance, and some add, universal holiness, and perseverance therein; and that the performance of these conditions either gives the right, or at least clears it up to us. And thus they pretend the matter stands in the record; and adduce all those places where faith and repentance, with that holiness of life which inseparably attends them, stand so peremptorily enjoined, and damnation denounced against all neglectors; to which they add, what seems to import, that God wills the salvation of all equally, and that Christ died for all; though, in truth, universal salvation is as much in the record, as universal redemption

demption in order to it; though in other respects, more than one, all men are both redeemed and saved by Christ.

Was the business of eternal life well understood, I apprehend it would appear, that such a scheme of salvation has not only no foundation in the divine record, but that it is absolutely impossible in the nature of the thing. By what we have already had occasion to observe, eternal life is none of those things which can be conveyed in the course of what we call moral government, nay nor by a mere act of grace, whether absolute or conditional. It must be conferred in the same manner, and by the same power, that the first creation-life was; and is, to all intents and purposes, as proper and true a creation as that was, though not extending at first to any sensible alteration on the body. And yet, as the whole human constitution is new moulded by the Spirit of life uniting with the human soul, the body too, in its animal affections and passions, undergoes a very real and remarkable change. This being the case, and that it is so the whole record is witness, matters must be carried on there

in the course of creation-grace, where the creature itself can have no share, but the glory of all accrues to the creator. And we had occasion to observe how things are so ordered, that the creature itself is conscious of, and therefore a witness to this great and fundamental constitution of the new creation.

This being the case ; and as it is plain by the event that they are only *some* of mankind that are thus chosen, and fitted up to be inhabitants of the new and eternal world, while many, nay we may say the bulk of mankind, are one way or other left to perish ; will any imagine that this happens by chance, or any other way, rather than by divine direction ?

But the men make high professions of their regard to God, and particularly what they call his moral character, and ask, with assurance, how it is consistent with his justice and sincerity, to call men to believe, and to denounce eternal vengeance against them that do not ; to make such solemn professions of his *own* readiness and willingness to save them, and

to say, that *they* will not, and that their destruction is of themselves?

What if we should answer, We cannot tell? and give this good reason for our being willingly ignorant of it, that we are none of God's judges? Either the facts are as they state them, or they are not. If they are not, God needs no apology for what is none of his doing. If they are so, they are his doings, and he needs none of our assistance to support his procedure, and it is astonishing impudence to impeach him. But it must be much more so when the case is considered as he has laid it. Whatever commands he has laid on mankind, he has assured us, "that of ourselves we can do nothing;" that faith itself is his gift, and cannot be had but by the Spirit of Christ. Thence it is evident, that the divine sincerity is in no danger.

But how comes he to command what we cannot perform? We may ask again, How he came to say, "Let there be light," and "Let the waters bring forth living creatures?" And in the new creation, "Awake, thou that sleep-

“est, and arise from the dead.” It would be very absurd in man to speak thus; but not so in God, who can with a command effect the thing, whatever it be. Our Lord states the case as it is, John v. 25. “The hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.”

But how comes it then, say they, that he does not second his command with power? And they may add, if they so please, Why “does he yet find fault? for who hath resisted his will?” Our Lord gives the true reason, Luke x. 21. “I thank thee, O Father, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.” He does not refuse that it was God’s doing, or turn it upon man; but lands it here, “Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.” And the Apostle Paul points strongly to the absurdity of measuring the procedure in the new creation by the rules of moral government: “Who art thou, O man, that repliest against God? shall the thing formed say to him that formed
“ed

“ed it, Why hast thou made me thus?
 “Hath not the potter power over the
 “clay, of the same lump to make one
 “vessel unto honour, and another unto
 “dishonour?” Rom. ix. 20. 21. These
 things are matters of mere grace; he can
 be debtor to none, and, without all ques-
 tion, he may do what he pleases with his
 own.

But after all, may one say, How can a-
 ny one believe the record, “that God hath
 “given him eternal life,” when the whole
 is left so loose, and apparently arbi-
 trary? I answer, The whole is indeed left
 on free sovereign grace, and there it
 should and must rest. So long as a sinner
 of Adam’s race is not content to put it on
 that issue, but insists on the terms of a
 moral government, he can have no pre-
 tensions to the grace of the new creation,
 but has a spirit utterly inconsistent with
 it. Yet this is so far from discouraging
 the hope, and even the faith, of a truly
 convinced and humbled sinner, that, of
 all things that can be imagined, it is the
 only one that can remove his greatest
 discouragements, viz. his own vileness,
 and

and his utter inability to help himself; both which he feels so sensibly, that let such a creature be put under the most perfect moral government, and make the terms of life as easy as any man dare venture to make them, it would fill him with despair, which nothing could remove but the prospect of a throne of grace, and the life lodged in Christ Jesus.

And when we add to this, that the grant of grace, as it stands in the record, is so conceived as to exclude none, and that no one of the children of men is more or less warranted to apply it than another, there is no small ground of hope. And as the sentiments and affections formerly mentioned are still carried further upon this view, Christ appears still more excellent and lovely, and the life that is lodged in him more desirable; the heart is more and more knit to him; and the nearer his salvation approaches, the more earnestly will it be pursued: though it must always be acknowledged, that however the soul is kept waiting, yet it neither doth, nor can make any particular and quieting conclusion, until, under the direction of the

the Holy Spirit, Christ and his salvation are brought nearer. And that is done,

5. When the Lord Jesus is set forth in the record as sent of God, to be received by sinners of mankind; set forth, to be believed on and trusted in, for answering all the purposes of eternal life; and all that hear the record, permitted, called, invited, pressed, nay very peremptorily commanded, to believe in his name.

I have laid all these together; because, however they contain different views, and may be distinctly considered, when one proposes to discourse at large upon this subject; yet all have the same tendency to warrant and oblige the hearers of the gospel to acquiesce and rest in Christ, as the great ordinance of God for eternal life.

And here we must advert to what we before observed, of the particular import of believing in Christ, when the promise of eternal life is set before us, as here sealed and ratified in him. It is the same with believing in his name, or being persuaded that he certainly will answer all the purposes to us for which he is sent and given to mankind; which is well expressed

*B. lived that I am able to do this.
Xt. our words -*

pressed by *trust* and confidence in him; and for this one needs no other warrant or inducement, after the views we have been taking of him, than God's *permission* to rely upon him; of which we should have had sufficient evidence, even though we had been left with nothing more than Christ sent unto us, and set before us, as he is in the record, chosen and appointed by God to be a perfect remedy against sin, and all its consequences; and that by becoming spirit and life to all that receive him.

Among the many emblems designed to represent and illustrate this trust or confidence to every capacity, there are two very remarkable ones, viz. the children of Israel passing from Egypt into the promised land; and the brazen serpent lifted up in the wilderness for the cure of the Israelites bitten by the fiery serpents. There was an ordinance of God in both cases: Moses was sent with a special commission; and the brazen serpent was set up for the whole Israelites. Such as believed Moses, and obeyed, were brought into the land of Canaan, while the rest fell in the wilderness. Those who looked to the brazen serpent

serpent lived; whilst those that did not, died of their wounds. In both cases, faith or confidence in the ordinance of God was the foundation of their compliance; but it was the power of God that brought them into the land, it was the power of God that healed their deadly wounds.

But when, besides a permission, we are called (and all that hear the gospel are called) to believe in him for life, and expect it from him, what can be desired more? Yet we have more; we are invited in the most endearing manner, and the invitation is pressed by the most interesting motives that can be conceived. What then can be said either for a refusal or a delay? Nothing surely at bottom, but unwillingness to renounce all, and venture all in the hands of Jesus. But it is often pretended, that "many are called, and few chosen;" and how shall we know that we are chosen? Why, truly, by no possible way in the world, but by giving the motives their due weight, and complying with the call. But we have no strength, no power, to come either to receive Christ, or to believe in him. God knows, and has told us, and assured

us, that we have no strength. But are you willing to have it? He has laid it ready in Christ; and it is the very intention of sending him, and calling you to receive and trust him, that you may have both life and strength from him, for every acting and exercise of the spiritual life.

But still some will say, (and a very unreasonable saying it is), The call and invitation is not particularly directed to me. It might be a sufficient answer to say, You are not excepted, and are as particularly called as ever any that believed was. Some particular kinds of men, labouring under particular discouragements, are expressly called, viz. "such as hunger and thirst," "such as labour, and are heavy laden;" and they who find themselves in such situations, may certainly conclude themselves called in particular. But that none may plead excuse, the open proclamation stands on record, "Whosoever will, let him come." Either then you are called, or you are not willing. But be it so, that none of these things will include you, there is something in the record that certainly will. It is the peremptory command of God, "to believe on him whom he

"hath

"hath sent;" and who dare say this is not directed to them?

6. We must add to this the fullest and most unlimited assurance of success to every soul that comes to him, and believes on him.

Nothing can be stronger than what our Lord says of the love of the Father, John iii. 16. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that *whoever* believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." And John vi. 40. he assures us, "This is the will of the Father, that whosoever seeth the Son, and believeth on him, shall have eternal life." And how strongly does he second his own invitation to come to him in the 37th verse of that same chapter? "*Him* that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." But what need we mention particulars, when the record is every where full of these assurances.

It is evident nothing can be desired, nor even imagined, more express; and where they have not their effect, it must be owing to something else than want of proper assurances; especially when they stand connected, as they are, with the personal

and public character of the great Redeemer, and the faithfulness, and steady unbiaſſed love he has ſhown to the children of Adam; the truſt committed to him of the Father, and his open profeſſion of making this his buſineſs, “to ſeek and “to ſave that which was loſt;” how he is ſent to be received, that is, ſet forth to be believed on, and truſted to. Nay, his mediatorial glory and honour is pledged upon it; and the glory of the riches of divine grace. Theſe are great things; and however a broken-hearted ſinner may, and very juſtly may, reckon himſelf below his notice, and much more unworthy of any favour, it is notwithstanding to be remembered, that he does for his own name’s ſake; and he gives, “not by works “of righteouſneſs done by men, but according to his own mercy.” And that is altogether free. Works cannot recommend, nor the utmoſt vileness exclude. Where ſin abounds, grace abounds much more abundantly.

But there is yet a further aſſurance from what our Lord hath told us, That “no “man can come unto him unleſs the Father draw him;” and, as a conſequence

of

of this, that whosoever cometh, must have "heard and learned of the Father." It is the peculiar excellency of the constitution of grace as it stands in the sacred record, and none of the lowest evidences of divine wisdom there, that every part contributes to strengthen another, and, with joint force, promote the design of the whole. What our Lord there says, would, at first sight, seem a discouragement, and has been often abused that way, as if it were an obstacle laid in the poor soul's way, against so much as attempting to come to Christ. It really is not so, in whatever light we view it, but a very necessary caution against attempting to come on any other presumption than the aids and drawing of the divine Spirit. But a further and much higher use of it falls in here: when the soul is thus drawn, the heart closing with Christ, and acquiescing in the fulness and all-sufficiency of this great ordinance of God, but discouraged by the sense and feeling of unworthiness; the reflection on this, that it is not they, but God himself, who hath given such a turn to their hearts, and carried them so far, gives the properest relief that can be desired,

desired. And when the Apostle's determination is added to it, "that he who hath begun, will perfect the good work in them unto the day of Christ," they have the fullest assurance, that God will not forsake the work of his own hands.

And now one may very justly conclude the Christian's heart established sufficiently on Christ Jesus, and that he has no more to do but to enter, with chearful confidence, on the proper business and entertainments of the Christian life. But our gracious God does not leave them unprovided there. But,

7. The record contains, and holds forth to us, a fair account of the Christian's state, and the abundant provision that is made for all exigencies and occurrences, in those great and precious promises which are sealed and ratified in Christ Jesus.

What the Apostle says of Christians in general, holds true of every individual, and extends to every condition he is or can be in: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, what God hath prepared for them that love him." And if God had not revealed it unto us by
his

his Spirit, which searches all things, the Christian himself must have continued so much a stranger to his own privileges, that he would have been ready to say as Nicodemus did, How can these things be? They are indeed so many and so high, that to set them in their proper light, the record itself must be had recourse to, which only can do them justice.

The Apostle gives it in one word: "We are complete in him, who is the head of principalities and powers." So that the Christian has no occasion to have recourse any where else, either to circumcision, and the ritual observance of Moses's law, which was the fashion of those days, or to any thing which men have laid stress upon since: "Neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith that worketh by love."

We have already had occasion to observe, how Christians are *crucified with Christ*. By their fellowship in his sufferings, and conformity unto his death, they are crucified to the world, and become dead to the law, so that they have
nothing

nothing to hope or fear from either. Hereby the dominion of sin is destroyed, and the sting taken from death ; and “ if they sin, “ they have an advocate with the Father, “ Jesus Christ the righteous, who is himself the propitiation for sin.” We have likewise seen how they are planted into the likeness of his resurrection, and partake of his Spirit and life ; how they are united unto him in the nearest manner, and by him become the children of God, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ : and who can declare or fully conceive the excellency of the inheritance ?

Here lies their supereminent dignity and glory, here lies their perfection and worth ; they have all the spirit of children, resembling perfectly their elder brother, that pattern of perfection, on which they are at present formed, and which they know that one day they shall be perfectly conformed unto ; their provision is secured for them in their Father’s house, secured for them in Christ Jesus : For “ he “ that spared not his own Son, but gave “ him up unto the death for us all, how “ shall he not with him also freely give us “ all things ?” All things are indeed theirs ;
but

but distributed to them, not according to their childish humour, but according to the wisdom of their heavenly Father. Their allowance is lodged in a faithful hand, who will not defraud them of their portion, in so much that they are commanded, "to be careful for nothing," but, as becomes dutiful children, "in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, to make their requests known unto their heavenly Father."

Their weakness is indeed great, their wants and necessities innumerable, and the difficulties and opposition they have to lay their account with such as no created power can support them against. Yet are they provided with such variety of great and precious promises, so suited to their exigencies, and all of them "yea and amen in Christ Jesus," that they can never be at a loss for matter enough to support their faith, so as to enable them even to quench all the fiery darts of Satan. And,

8. We conclude with observing, that, in the record, the man in Christ is provided with a complete directory how to

walk worthy of the Lord, and the vocation wherewith he is called.

There are three points which ingross the attention and make the business of every living creature, viz. such things as are necessary for the support and maintenance of life, — such things as are subservient to growth and improvement, — and such as contribute to the enjoyment of life. These, in a particular manner, are the business, and the whole business of that spiritual life which the Christian lives in the flesh. And how ill the children of Adam are qualified for any of them, may be easily judged of by the methods the wisest men have pursued, and the moral instructions of the most refined philosophers.

Were the new creature made perfect at its first entrance on life, it might very well be trusted, in the close union it stands with Christ and his Spirit. But “the flesh lusteth against the Spirit,” as well as “the Spirit against the flesh;” and reason, the common servant of both, is but ill able to execute its office. It was therefore a very kind, as well as a wise provision, to assist weak reason to draw the proper consequences

sequences from the facts as they stand in the record; to direct us how to live on Christ, the proper food as well as the life of the soul; to inform us what exercises and spiritual employments are best adapted to raise the new vital powers to their highest perfection, and where true pleasure is to be found. And, in truth, all these run into one another: the whole business of a Christian is, to behold the glory of God as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ; there is their life, there also lie all the materials of enjoyment; nor is there one single command in the whole extent of the divine law, which is not either a piece of the Christian's happiness, or stands necessarily connected with it, either fitting and preparing for it, or guarding against such things as might mar and hinder it.

It would answer very little purpose to enter more minutely into these particulars, unless one were to give something of a complete view of the scripture-directory. Christ is the pattern; his example is the great and comprehensive rule; and the whole duty of a Christian is only a more extended draught of conformity to Christ.

It will answer our present purpose better, to review what we have hinted, and give a short abstract of the effects of the faith of Christ, or, which is the same thing,

II. THE impressions which the true belief of the divine record concerning Christ makes upon the Christian, wherein the life of faith lies, which was the second thing I proposed to illustrate. Of these impressions we shall but just mention the leading and fundamental ones, whereby proper sentiments are formed, and the heart balanced into answerable affections and passions; in which it will be readily acknowledged the right temper of mind consists, and from which will necessarily follow a suitable way of living and course of action.

1. We observed as the first impression of faith upon the soul, a very high esteem of, and a profound veneration for the Lord Jesus Christ. And very high the esteem must be, ere it comes any thing near being proportioned to the excellency of his person as he is in himself, without taking any other views. But as he is more and more distinctly perceived

ceived in his public character, where our all, for time and eternity, appears to be in his hand, esteem will be attended with veneration, that is, the highest regard a creature can possibly entertain. This, in ignorant minds, often degenerates into that vain superstition which is so visible in the Popish monasteries, and too much of it nearer home.

2. On further views, and nearer acquaintance with Christ, and his way, there appears so much loveliness and sweetness in his whole conduct, such condescension and kindness, that the heart is insensibly pleased with him, the great things he had in view, and his manner of conducting every part of his undertaking; and thus, by very natural degrees, is raised up to *love*; and in consequence of that, can find no rest without the greatest nearness to him that can possibly be attained. I need not enter upon any account of the nature and actings of this leading affection: every body knows it commands the whole man, and engages every power in the pursuit of its own views. And hence,

3. It becomes the highest pleasure to the

the Christian, to sacrifice every thing to the beloved object: all other things are slighted, and go for nothing; and whatever appears to be inconsistent with, much more if it stand in opposition to the enjoyment of the person whom he loves, becomes the object of his severest abhorrence. How much are the world mistaken! They look upon mortification and self-denial, crucifying the flesh with the lusts and affections, and renouncing the world, as very terrible, and even impracticable things: and no wonder they should; for they love these things. But to a Christian, under the influence of faith working by love, these of all duties are the most agreeable and pleasing.

4. On further and more confirmed views of Christ, the believer is gradually led on to trust him without reserve. Love at first, though very real, and perhaps very fervent, yet, for many obvious reasons, is oppressed and borne down with doubts and fears; and the more real and fervent love is, the more apt the person is to entertain jealousies. It requires acquaintance and some experience to beget confidence. But when perfect love comes

to cast out fear, with all the torment that attends it, Christ is trusted with all; the believer is contented to be any thing he is pleased to make him; and for a world, nay, for ten thousand worlds, he would not have any separate interests from him. And thence,

5. The believer comes to feel his own happiness; to conclude, that the lines are fallen to him in pleasant places, and that he has a goodly heritage. His heart was reconciled to God from the time he first saw him in Christ. There he found him in all his fulness, and the all-sufficiency of his power; and now he finds him to be his own, his God, and his Father; and despises, as dung trodden under foot, all the world can do either for or against him. Here he takes up his rest, and thankfully acquiesces in any station or place that his heavenly Father is pleased to allot him either in his house or in his world. And,

6. Hence arises that astonishing courage and resolution the right believer is possessed of. Conscious as he is of his dignity, as a man in Christ, a child of God, and a chosen inhabitant of the eternal world;

world; conscious too of the worth and value of the great Captain of salvation, and God himself in him, with all the power and all the hosts of heaven on his side; he contracts a true greatness of spirit, quite different from the silly pride of the sons of Adam; he walks in the name of the Lord, and in him he is allowed, and commanded, to boast and glory.

What follows would be all pure enjoyment, were it not for that load of flesh which the new creature in his present embryo state is forced to carry about with him, by which he is so closely connected with a present world, kept absent from his Lord, and constantly plagued with the perverse appetites, and passions, and affections, of the old man. For however he is *crucified*, that is, fastened to the cross of Christ; yet he is not *dead* until the body be laid in the dust. And though sin cannot have dominion over the man in Christ, yet it can strongly solicit, and too often prevails against him. And hence in the

37. and last place, Faith keeps the Christian in a constant sense and feeling of his own nothingness and corruption, and a
 needy

needy dependence on the Spirit and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and his all-sufficient sacrifice and intercession; on his Spirit and grace to be preserved from temptation and sin, and on his blood for pardon and cleansing. Thus the Apostle states the case, 1 John ii. 1. "These things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins." As neither his courage and resolution, nor any of the grounds of that greatness of spirit I mentioned, lie in himself, the more vigorously they are excited, the more is the Spirit and life of Christ felt, and the greater his humility and self-denial. And there lies his safety.

I shall now conclude with two or three observations, which may be of some use for the further clearing this very useful and important subject.

The first relates to the several accounts that are given of faith, or believing, in the divine writings, both of the Old and New Testaments, and the different expressions made use of concerning it; all of them indeed very significant and pro-

per where they are used, but which may easily occasion some confusion in the conceptions of unexperienced readers. From the account we have been giving of it, it will be easy to see how justly faith, or believing, is applied to express the proper regard with which the record and testimony of God ought to be received and entertained, and how, from the different views there given us of Christ, the faith of Christ is likewise differently expressed. As he is sent of God, he is to be received, acknowledged, and entertained, as becomes the character he bears, as a Saviour, Redeemer, Prophet, Priest, King, and all that is comprehended in the name *Christ* or the *Messiah*. It is believing, that Jesus is the Christ, with all the consequential sentiments and affections which these views of him natively raise and influence, as we have shortly pointed them out; and which give rise to trusting him, trusting in him, rejoicing, boasting, glorying in him, with other such expressions of confidence and love; which have occasioned many learned and laborious discourses upon the nature of faith, and not a few mistakes: for while some pitch up-

on one view, and some upon another, it is no wonder that the common reader should be left in great confusion, when things are separated and taken asunder which God hath so very closely and inseparably united.

It is to be further observed, that faith in Christ is inseparably connected with faith in God the Father; and in the Holy Spirit. With respect to the first, our Lord assures us, that he that believeth on him, believeth not on him, but on the Father that sent him. And the Apostle Peter tells us, 1 Pet. i. 21. That it is through him that Christians do believe in God. Nor indeed can it be otherwise in the nature of the thing. In him God manifests himself unto us, not only in the beauty and excellency of his adorable fulness, but especially in the glory of the riches of his grace, the only view that could ever restore a convicted rebel to any confidence in his justly offended sovereign. The faith of Christ leads as necessarily to faith in the Holy Spirit, who dwells in him without measure, and which accordingly he communicates unto every Christian; and thus, faith terminates equally on the

whole adorable Trinity, and raises the heart into suitable sentiments and affections.

And hence it necessarily follows, that all those sentiments and affections commonly and very properly called *the graces or free gifts of the Spirit*; such as those which we find the Apostle recommending, Gal. v. 22, 23. as fruits of the Spirit, are no other than the proper impressions which the faith of Christ makes upon the heart, and which it cannot miss to do where-ever it is true and real. And this gives us a further view of the security that is provided for the Christian against his continuance in sin, viz. That as, by the Christian's union with Christ, he is made a partaker of his Spirit; so the Spirit dwelling in him by faith, forms his heart at once into the belief of, and conformity and suitableness unto the divine record. And this gives a further view of the thoughtless perverseness of those who reproach the gospel of Christ, as giving encouragement to sin; which they would see to be absolutely impossible, if they knew what the Christian faith and the grace of the gospel really are.

Here likewise we may observe the distinguishing characters of the Christian life, manifesting and discovering themselves in the exercises and actings of it. As it is founded in the Spirit and life of Christ, and is really, and in strict propriety, a different kind and species of life from that which the children of Adam live; so it manifesteth itself, by "looking, not at the things which are seen, which are temporal, but at those things which are not seen, and are eternal." Believers set their affections on things above, and not on things on the earth; accordingly "they seek those things which are above, where Christ is exalted at the Father's right hand." And, to say all in one word, "their conversation is in heaven." The word is very comprehensive and proper; it signifies the life or way of living of a citizen, where all one's interests and all his business lies. They are citizens of heaven; their inheritance, their treasure, and of course their heart, is there; and there all their business lies that is worth looking after. They are but pilgrims and strangers on this earth, and have nothing but a present

subsistence

subsistence to look for here. This is what gives them the advantage they have above others, the victory by which they overcome the world; a victory which none of the wise moralists, so much admired by men, who knew not the nature and worth of Christianity, could ever attain to. The Apostle makes the challenge, "Who is he that overcometh the world," "but he that believeth that Jesus is the "Son of God?" And there never has, nor ever will be, a man found able to answer it.

Here then we have a short, but a most complete and perfect Christian directory. He that has the faith of Christ, has all; he that wants it, has nothing. Well might our Lord say, that "this is the work of "God, that ye believe on him whom he "hath sent." It secures the heart for God through Jesus Christ; and that secures the whole man, all his thoughts, all his words and actions; forming the whole of his conduct of life upon a perfect, a most infallible pattern. The Apostle Paul gives the same account of the Christian's business: "Neither circumcision
 "cification;

“ cision; but faith which worketh by
“ love.”

This then is the direction every Christian must mind, if ever he would thrive. Look well to your faith: as that is weak or strong, languishing or lively, such will the whole Christian frame be. And therefore,

1. Beware of starving your faith, by neglecting to lay in proper provision. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. That is the only sustenance for faith; and what the word holds forth and conveys through faith into the heart, viz. the grace of God in Christ, is the only support of the soul. “ Wherefore, as new born babes, desire
“ the sincere milk of the word, that ye
“ may grow thereby.” “ And let the
“ word of Christ dwell in you richly, in
“ all knowledge and spiritual understand-
“ ing.” It is the Spirit of Christ indeed which alone can kindle and maintain this divine flame; but it is the Christian’s business to lay the fuel ready.

2. Beware of poisoning your faith. And this may be done either by perverse principles or practices. Both commonly go together,

together, and mutually contribute support to each other. The milk of the word must be sincere, or without mixture, in order to nourishment; for every foreign mixture gives it a poisonous quality: and as without Christ we can do nothing; so, in the same degree that any thing else is trusted to, so far our strength is lost.

3. Beware of spoiling your faith, by suffering it to lie idle. Exercise is as necessary in the spiritual life, as in the natural. By faith the Christian lives, and of course he only lives so far as faith is kept in constant exercise. I do not like a distinction which is too often used, between faith in the habit, and faith in exercise. Just so much activity and exercise as there is, so much is there of faith; and whenever it ceases to act, the Christian ceases to live. The seeds of life may be in him; but life lies in living, or in the exercise of life. At the same time we must beware of attempting to live, that is, to exercise faith, or any other grace, but by strength derived from the Spirit of life.

DIS-

DISSERTATION IV.

Who loved me, and gave himself for me.

THUS far we have considered the Christian life, as the Apostle describes it from his own experience and personal feeling.

The way of entering into it is, by *being crucified with Christ.*

The distinguishing nature of it consists in Christ's *living in the Christian.* And,

The Christian's way of living in the flesh is, *by the faith of the Son of God.*

And could we keep in this way, all would, all must be perfectly well with us. But what we find complained of in the old Israelites, Psal. 95. that they erred in their hearts, and did not know the way of God, continues to be so still.

There are three capital errors which men professing, or attempting to be Christians, very naturally run into, which ruin the whole of their success, and instead of adorning their profession, by shewing forth the power and virtue of

our Lord Jesus Christ in a conformity unto him in his death and resurrection, disgrace their profession, and bring reproach on that worthy name whereby they are called.

The first respects the object of their faith, what they are to believe. These things are indeed fairly set before us in the record God has made concerning his ever-blessed Son; but multitudes cannot bear the pains that are necessary, to search the scriptures diligently, to see what these things are. They content themselves with what they can learn about them occasionally, or in transient glances; and resting in general confused apprehensions of things they never attain any distinct apprehensions of the state of the spiritual world, or the God they pretend to worship. And thence "being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and going about to establish their own righteousness," their faith answers no better purpose than to subject them to greater condemnation; and at the same time that they, in some measure, escape the pollutions that are in the world through lust, they fall into another course of rebellion still more fatal, viz. "neglect-
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“ing the great salvation, which was first
“spoken by the Lord, and confirmed unto
“us by them that heard him.”

The second error respects the grounds and foundations on which faith should stand; the revelation which God makes of himself by his Spirit in Christ Jesus, powerfully impressed on the hearts and spirits of men. Many take up with a light credulity, or loose opinion, founded only in the authority or reasonings of men: they have some confused notions, perhaps, of the testimony of God; but the evidences he has given of his faithfulness, and real concern about us, are not at all attended to. Such superficial conceits can never answer the purpose of faith, nor bear the stress which lies upon it in the Christian life.

These two seldom go further than an outward form, a shadow of Christianity, without any substance at all. But there is a third error which insinuates itself often into the most serious, and such as really make religion their business. They believe the general principles, and the facts there attested concerning Christ, and salvation through him; but stop short with-

out any particular application to themselves. They treat the gospel as a system of speculative truths, of very great moment indeed to such as have any interest in them, and of promises too exceeding great and precious, and perfectly sure to such as they belong to: But as they dare not reckon themselves among that number, nay and reckon it presumption to do so, all is kept at such a distance, that they make no impression on the heart, and consequently have no influence on the life. That they are very happy for whom Christ died; that "whosoever believes in him, shall not perish, but have everlasting life;" and that "the loving kindness of God is better than life;" all this they readily admit: but until one can say with the Apostle, *Christ loved me, and gave himself for me*; that is, until one sees his own interest in Christ, and, as the Apostle John expresses it, "knows and believes the love that God hath to him;" his faith is defective in a very essential point; and the spiritual life, if there be any, is at so low an ebb, that both the comfort and the fruit of it are lost.

I had occasion to touch upon this in the foregoing

foregoing discourse, when speaking of the impressions which the faith of Christ makes upon the heart, by which one may be enabled to determine a question which has been very warmly disputed, *Whether assurance be of the essence of faith?* And disputed it has been, until faith itself seems to be disputed away, and little left among Christians but a faint shadow of it, that answers no manner of purpose, but giving those a name to live, who are really, and to all intents and purposes, dead. I have no mind to enter into the intricacies this question has been involved in, by men who have had some other purposes to answer by it, than barely the advancement of religion, and the edification of the body of Christ: but as the Apostle has given it as his own experience, and joins it so closely with living by the faith of the Son of God, I do not see how any Christian can satisfy himself without something of the same experience. And even those who talk so much of sincerity as the only perfection required in the gospel, must acknowledge, there can be no sincerity, without not only aiming at perfection, but using all the means which have

have any tendency to advance one in the way to it: And I think, it will readily be acknowledged, that just so much as is wanting of assurance, so much there will be of doubtfulness; and so much of doubtfulness, so much unbelief. The Apostle Paul is positive, that Abraham could not so much as stagger at the promise but through unbelief, Rom. iv. 20.

What I propose, therefore, is only to lay together some considerations for clearing up the nature of the Christian faith, as it relates to one's personal interest in the dying love of the Redeemer, so as he shall be able to distinguish his faith, as the Apostle did, *who loved me, and gave himself for me*; or as the Apostle John does, "We have known and believed the love that God hath to us." And then we may consider how or by what means the soul comes to be raised up from the utmost uncertainty, and sometimes the brink of despair, into this comfortable reflection of faith, "*who loved me, and gave himself for me.*"

I. WE begin with the evidences and assurances we have, that it is the very nature

ture and essence of faith, to establish the heart on the love of Christ, and his redemption, particularly applied to ourselves.

—And here,

1. It is to be considered what it is the Christian is called to believe. This is the first and most natural inquiry, and which singly might determine the question. If there is nothing of the love of Christ or his redemption, or, which is the same thing, the love of God to a perishing world, held forth to be believed, then indeed this persuasion of the Apostle's must stand on some other bottom. But, on the other hand, if the Apostle John's account of the record or testimony of God be true, "That God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son;" or, which is the same thing, That God hath given us his Son, and eternal life in him; the very belief of this will infer all the Apostle says, *That he hath loved us, and given himself for us.*

This is so true, that just according to the conceptions men form to themselves of what they call the object of faith, that is, what is to be believed, such will their faith be; and thence arises all the numerous

rous differences, sects, and parties, that are to be found among Christians.

There was a time when it was the received doctrine among all Protestants, that the word of God carried in it such divine light, and power, as, under the conduct of the Holy Spirit, approved itself unto the hearts and consciences of men, and made faith of the things there held forth; and this was then thought agreeable unto the experience of all true Christians. And as the special mercy of God to sinners in Christ, and the love of Christ, in giving himself a ransom for them, is the great import of the gospel; to believe this, was thought to be the very essence, and distinguishing characteristic, of true faith.

But in time, when the belief of the scriptures came to be founded in what they call rational evidence, and deductions from what is called natural religion, that is, a pretended philosophical knowledge of God, and men took it into their heads to become Christians as they become philosophers, or men of learning, there was no such effect felt in their faith; which they reckoned upon as an argument from experience, that there was no assurance

assurance belonging to faith, but such as was gathered up by rational evidence, and reflecting on the effects of faith felt in themselves.

What contributed much to support this last conclusion was, the notion of the gospel which now generally prevails, that it is no more but a conditional constitution, or a promise and offer of pardon and eternal life upon the terms of a sinner's believing in Christ: "He that believeth, &c. shall be saved; and he that believeth not, shall be damned."

This our Lord indeed gives as the final issue of the gospel being preached. When it is so, it will either be believed or not; and the event in either case will be respectively as he hath expressed it. But this says, that the gospel, which is to be believed, is a different thing from that which is but the consequence of it.

The *gospel*, properly speaking, as that word is used in the New Testament, is that which the angels call so, "the glad tidings of great joy:" That the Christ, the promised Messiah, or anointed one, was born, and actually exhibited in the person of Jesus. There was then no dis-

pute about the general character of the Messiah. That he was to be a saviour, a deliverer, to give life, health, and prosperity, was allowed. The blinded Jews, indeed, saw no further than a present world. But it was not doubted by any Christian, that it is eternal salvation he is the author of. And is not this the very thing the Apostle John says of the record? "The Son of God is sent into the world to give eternal salvation." They who believe this, and find that he, with the life that is in him, is freely given to every one who will receive him, must directly apply it to themselves, and believe, if they believe any thing at all, that his redemption, and the life he has to bestow, are given to them. But,

Let us consider the state of the gospel, or what the Christian has to believe, more particularly as it is a testimony given by God, and a record made of his constitution of grace, and the method he has fixed upon for giving eternal life to the perishing race of Adam, which we are peremptorily bound to receive and believe, under this most rousing certification, "He that believeth not, shall be *damm'd*;" and great

great reason for it, because "he that believeth not, hath made God a liar," in not receiving the testimony he has given concerning his Son. Had that record no further intention, than that God had really given to some of mankind that life, a general belief would have answered it, and no body could have been obliged to more; much less could they have incurred such a dreadful imputation, by suffering it to pass by as a thing they were not obliged to know, that they had any particular concern in. But that, we are sure, is not the case. It is so given to every man that hears the gospel, that he must either receive it for himself, or be found guilty of rejecting it, under all the aggravating circumstances that attend it. And indeed so it is, by what we had occasion to observe of the state of the record. The gift is set before men, and they are called, pressed, and urged by all the motives that can prevail with a reasonable creature, to believe, and are assured they shall succeed; that "he is faithful who hath promised it," and that it is not possible they can be disappointed. What stronger foundation can we desire to build the

most particular application to ourselves, and the best-grounded assurance on? Nor is it possible for one to avoid it, without making God a liar in one of two respects; either that he will not give the life he has said he will give, or that it is not worth having: and, in both cases, the gift and gracious provision is expressly rejected.

But, say the wise men of the world, and they say it with great confidence, How can these things be so? Is it not plain fact, that there are, and always have been, multitudes who have had the gospel preached to them in the same manner it is to those who believe; and yet, by the event, it appears, that they were reprobates; and consequently, that Christ neither loved them, nor gave himself for them? and yet, say they, these are called to believe, and pressed to it, with the very same arguments and motives, and the same encouragements, with the elect. Were this then the thing proposed to be believed, that God giveth unto them eternal life; or that Christ loved them, and died for them; they would be bound to believe what is not true; nay more, what cannot

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be true, because "the gifts and calling of
" God are without repentance."

To this an answer has been often made,
That it is indeed not true, that God gives
eternal life, and his Son, in whom this
life is, to any particular person until it
be believed, but becomes true whenever
it is. This has been thought a very bad
sort of assertion; and some have been bold
enough to bestow abundance of wit to ex-
pose it: and yet there is nothing more
obviously true. God never gave, and ne-
ver promised to give, eternal life, or any
of the blessings connected with it, to an
unbeliever. The gift lies in common,
without any determinate application to
any one person more than another, just
as Christ himself, in whom this life lies,
is set forth as a common saviour. And
what we call believing, or faith, is the
established method, the mean which God
has ordained for applying it. The pro-
clamation is general, "Whosoever will,
" let him come and take;" and coming
and taking are the application of the ge-
neral gift. And these are but other words
for believing; for in no other way can we
" come and take the waters of life freely."

But

But here it must be remembered, that however it is by this application of faith that we are received, yet it is still through grace, and not according to any works of righteousness done by us. That very faith which makes the application is the gift of God, wrought by the Spirit of Christ in the heart and spirit of the believer, and is no more than the first vital act of the new creature; such as all the efforts of free will, with all the assistances that can be called in by any of the children of Adam, could never effect. This makes a perfect consistency in the method of grace: God gives his Son, and life in him: he really gives or imparts life by his Spirit, and, at that very time, not sooner, the man believes he gives it; and, when he does so, must believe, that Christ has “loved him, and given himself for him;” which was indeed true before, but he could not know it sooner.

But possibly it may be said, This accounts very well for the believer, but how can those who are finally reprobate, believe what neither is, nor will be true? But may we not say again, What hinders it from being true but unbelief? that

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is, they will not receive it as God gives it: and whose fault is that? But it will be said, If faith was the native effect of free will, it would indeed be the man's fault: but it is the gift of God; and how can the man be damned for God's withholding his gift? The proper answer to so bold a charge would be what the Apostle gives in a case near of kin to this, "Who art thou, O man, who repliest against God?" The strength of the answer lies in the question, "Who art thou, O man?" and one may say, with great assurance, that no man that knows himself, will ever talk in that manner. He will feel in himself, his conscience will tell him, that he has treated the astonishing grace of God, manifested in his Son Jesus Christ, in such an unworthy manner, that it is perfectly consistent with the most boundless riches of grace to shut him out for ever from any part or share in it, and that nothing but sovereign grace can prevent his eternal destruction. And this conviction will be yet stronger, if he knows indeed the state and temper of his own heart, what it is that moves him to make such an objection,

jection, as it argues a heart not at all reconciled to the grace of God, and his way of bestowing eternal life in the new creation. He cannot think of living by grace, but will be at doing something to make the purchase. He will not receive it on God's terms, and so stand altogether indebted to Christ; which is as much as to say, that he will not have it at all. The man that is content to be nothing, to deny himself, and follow Christ, will find the way open to a throne of grace, where he can never be at a loss for either mercy or grace. And he that will not go there to have it, complains injuriously, and without any cause, if he goes without it.

I have been, I know not how, drawn in to speak so much on this, and indeed it is the foundation of all we have to add on this subject. But more particularly,

2. Let us consider how every man that is called to believe, is called to believe in Christ; and in whatever view we consider the faith of Christ, it will very naturally, and even necessarily, land us where it did the Apostle, viz. in the particular application of his redeeming love to ourselves.

And

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And as this is the great design of the gospel, to set forth Christ, it must be the more particularly considered. And there are three questions which will very naturally occur to any one who thinks seriously on this subject.—Who he is, or what we are to believe about him?—What we are to believe in him for?—and, What we do when we believe in him?—I have no mind to repeat what I have said on these points; and therefore, taking the record as it stands, we have only the issue it runs into to consider.

And surely it is hard to conceive how a creature, in our circumstances, can look with indifference on the astonishing discovery of divine love to mankind in the very constitution of the person of Christ; God uniting himself to man, condescending to dwell with men upon the earth, and to show himself the spring and fountain of eternal life to them. When we look further, and consider how he died, and rose again, according to the scriptures; how he is set forth a propitiation through faith in his blood, and has entered into heaven, there to appear in the presence of God for us; can such a won-

derful display of love be believed without affecting the heart in the most powerful manner?

But the call, to believe in Christ, or to believe in his name, carries our views further, viz. to what we believe in him for, or what we are taught to expect and look for from him. And indeed they are no trifles we are directed to expect, nor can any such be expected from such a hand. When God gives, he gives like himself; and when God condescends to appear like one of us, and takes part with the children of Adam, it raises expectation to the highest. Indeed it is a divine work; the pardon of by-past offences is but an introduction to it. It is no less than a new creation; the forming, out of the ruins of Adam's race, and Adam's world, "a new heaven, and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness;" and a set of inhabitants fitted for such a world, to be heirs of eternal life, to be made the sons of God, formed after his image, the standard of perfection; and all this by Jesus Christ. And is it possible to believe on him for such things as these, without

without applying the general call to ourselves in particular? It cannot be. For,

When we believe in Jesus, or in his name, for these things, is it not for ourselves we believe? Can we do it without expecting and looking for them, without believing he will do what he was given, what he was sent, to do; what he came into the world, took our flesh upon him, lived and died to open a way for; what he rose from the dead, and has all power given him, and, to say all in one word, what he has promised and bound himself to do, by his own unchangeable faithfulness? Can we believe in him without trusting him for these things, and looking for them? and can we do that, without believing, and thankfully acknowledging, that "he hath loved us, and given himself for us?"

This might be made yet more plain, by instancing in the particular benefits of pardon and justification, the adoption of children, the new birth, and new nature, with all the consequences of them; where it would appear how impossible it is to believe, any of these can be bestowed, much less to expect them through Christ,

as they must do who believe in his name, without taking in the only foundation on which they can stand, the particular love of Christ in giving himself for us: So that however almost every thing about him, the facts by which he is known even by the best Christians, may be believed after a sort, that is, in such a loose speculative way, as we commonly do things we have no concern in; yet, in the nature of the thing, it is evident, that we cannot believe in him, that is, trust him, or expect any thing from him, but by a particular application of the general declarations, calls, promises, and encouragements, laid in common in the gospel, to ourselves, and our own particular circumstances, and the condition we are in. And this leads us,

3. To consider the distinguishing character of the Christian faith, viz. that it is “a believing with the heart.” So we find it almost every where distinguished from the loose general dead faith of temporary and customary professors. So the Apostle, Rom. x. 10. lays it down as an uncontested principle, That “with the heart man believeth unto righteousness.” And,

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in the same manner, Philip lays it before the eunuch, Acts viii. 27. as the only case in which it was lawful to baptize him: "If thou believest with all thy heart." And if we know what the heart is in scripture-language, and that is the same with the language of men, we will see it must of necessity be so.

The heart is the most inward, and therefore the most hidden and reserved part of the man. And thence it has become the common expression of sincerity, that what we do with all our heart, we agree to without any secret reserve, or contrary inclination, which often creates an inward reluctance to the thing, which yet, on weightier considerations, we see proper to go into, and which we find frequently necessary for avoiding greater evils.

Every body will acknowledge the necessity of the utmost sincerity in the business of believing, as "all things are naked" and open to him with whom we have to "do." But this cannot be until the inward sentiment, which is especially designed by the heart, is thoroughly formed upon the truth as it is in Jesus: That, upon

a fair and full view of things as they are stated in the constitution of grace, we are perfectly pleased with the whole, and every part of it; and thereby effectually determined to renounce all relations, interests, prospects, and projects, which are any how inconsistent therewith. This is so plain a case, that no body will pretend to dispute the general truth. But when the particulars come to be considered as our Lord has stated them, "to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow him; to hate father and mother," &c. the nearest and most endearing relations, and even our own lives, when they come, as they often do, into competition with him; the insincerity of our hearts betrays itself, and our secret sentiments show themselves in very earnest efforts to explain away the fixed rules of the gospel, or at least to bring them so low, as to admit the reserve we have perhaps undesignedly and ignorantly made.

The heart is likewise the seat of all our affections and passions; these command the whole man, and are the immediate springs of all our actions good and bad;

as they either are, or necessarily produce, what we call the will; that is, those inclinations or aversions which we express when we say, We *will*, or *will not*, and upon which all our actions, and the whole conduct of life, depends. While these are not balanced by proper and well-founded sentiment, every external impression will create its correspondent affection and passion, and the man will be exactly such as the Apostle describes him, a slave to divers lusts and pleasures, Tit. iii. 3. Thus it is our blessed Lord, who never mistook any thing, tells us, "A good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, brings forth good things; and an evil man, out of the evil treasure of his heart, brings forth evil things."

And hence it is easy to see, that as, in other matters, nothing can touch the heart without such a particular application as makes one sensibly feel his interest and concern in it, so it must be likewise in the business of believing in Christ. Job speaks very feelingly of the vast odds there is between a distant report of God, and being sensible, as he was then made, of his presence,

fence, and how nearly he was concerned in him. The case is the same with Christ, now that he is received up into glory. A general report of him is left behind, as of a very extraordinary person who once lived in this world; but until one feels he is one with whom he now hath, and must hereafter have to do; however we may be in love with his character, as we are with other great men recorded in history, the heart neither is, nor can be, affected, so as to have all our hopes and fears for time and eternity centered in him. This is the business of faith; and until it has brought the heart to acquiesce and rest in him, none can say they have believed in him.

And this leads to consider Christ as he is set forth unto faith, *as the giver of rest*. In this character he invites the weary and heavy laden to come to him, Matth. xi. 28. Nay he himself is the very *rest* of the soul, the rest that remains for the people of God. After the first creation-rest was broken by sin, and the typical Canaan-rest at an end, God *rested* in Christ; in him he was perfectly pleased; and accordingly they who believe in Christ, are said to enter into God's rest,

rest, Heb. iv. 3. But how can that be, until their hearts are formed into such just and well-founded sentiments of him, as makes them: acquiesce entirely in him, and there lose all those anxieties and cares which distressed and distracted them? And how can this be, so long as they are in doubt, whether they have any interest in him? and whenever they have, then they can say with the Apostle, that Christ "loved them, " and gave himself for them." And this leads

4. To consider faith as it has it in its nature to produce love, and to produce it in the same degree, and by the same steps, that itself rises towards perfection. By Christ we believe in God; and accordingly faith presents Christ as the nearest and immediate object of love. But his amiableness cannot be set in a just light, until "God is viewed in him reconciling " the world to himself, not imputing " their trespasses unto them;" and thus love, just as faith was, is carried through Christ unto the Father. He and the Father are so *one*, that they can neither be seen nor loved separately. In Christ's re-

lation to, and union with, the Father, his excellency and glory lies; and in those views of grace which are given us in Christ, are laid the foundation of all our love to him.

The all-sufficient God is indeed without dispute infinitely amiable and lovely in himself; and must accordingly, one should think, be esteemed and loved by every creature who is capable of perceiving his glory: and yet it is not so in fact. The devils, we know, entertain an implacable enmity against him, and vent it on all occasions so far as lies in their power: and the reason of it is not far to seek; they know he is their irreconcilable enemy; they have no mercy to look for, nothing to expect from his hand but utter destruction. This turns their aversion into desperate rage. And the same would have been the state of man, had there been no revelation of grace. We see the beginnings of it in Adam: when sin had got in and settled in his conscience, he tries to hide himself from the presence of that God whom he had so often entertained as his friend. And had he been suffered to go on, a total estrange-

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ment would very quickly have followed ; his evil conscience would have painted his creator as an enemy ; that would have been followed with blasphemous wishes, that he might be kept out of his hands, that either God's power were less or his own greater. " Skin for skin ; all " that a man hath will he give for his " life," was one true sentence uttered by the father of lies.

His posterity are not in a situation quite so bad : the first of them that was born found, that God had *revealed* himself a God of grace and mercy ; and, in spite of all the corruption and ignorance that has overwhelmed the world, this persuasion has kept its room, more or less, among all nations. Nor is it to be wondered at ; it keeps hope alive ; nay it has been improved in all ages to flatter the vanity of mankind : They have thought it a discovery made by themselves, a piece of natural knowledge ; and soothing their vanity with the prospect of recommending themselves by one means or another to the favour of God, many means have been tried, to very little, or rather to no purpose at all : They continue still estranged from God, absolutely in the dark, cut off from

all correspondence with him: and the more they know of him and of themselves, the less their confidence; because their hearts smite them, and their consciences dictate what they deserve. They cannot bear the thoughts of such a God as he really is; and every one tries to mould him into such a form as suits his circumstances best: The surest evidence can be given of their perfect hatred of him, as he really is in himself.

Thus deeply inlaid, in the present human constitution, are the seeds of enmity against their creator, the great sovereign of heaven and earth: and these, the Apostle assures us, will continue until their "hearts be sprinkled from an evil conscience;" which they cannot be, "till the blood of Jesus, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot unto God, purge the conscience from dead works," by giving them good assurance of pardon, and such a sight of God as perfectly suits their circumstances. The greatness and majesty arising from the holiness of the divine nature, that is boundless perfection united, overwhelms the soul of a sinner, raises admiration, and a sort of

of esteem, veneration, and fear; but such as drives the soul into despair, that is, carries him further and further from God, until he sees him as he appears in Christ Jesus, just such a God as the guilty sinner has occasion for; which abates nothing of his esteem and veneration, but, at the same time, makes him appear not only worthy of his love, but touches the heart in the most sensible and affecting manner, and dissolves it into love.

But what need we stand reasoning a point which the beloved disciple, who had the best reason ever man had to understand it, has very expressly determined? "We love him, because he loved us first," 1 John iv. 19. And that none might entertain such a perverse imagination, that God loves us, because we love him, he assures us, vers. 10. it is not so: "Not that we loved him, but that he loved us;" and gave this most infallible token of it, "that he gave his own beloved Son a propitiation for our sins:" and vers. 16. he lays this down as the foundation of our loving God, "that we have known and believed the love that God hath to us."

And

And now, as nothing can root out these jealousies and evil surmisings, these seeds of enmity against God, but good assurance, that he is not the enemy we take him for, nor any thing subdue and recover the straying heart of man into the love of God but assurance of his love; and as this cannot be had, but by the particular application of faith we are speaking of, one of two things must follow; either that all true faith carries in it such a particular application of Christ, the great evidence, token, and pledge, of the love of God to us; or, what no Christian can admit of, that there may be true faith, where yet there is no love, either to God or his Christ.

5. We may gather yet further evidence of the truth we are upon from the inseparable connection there is between true faith, and confidence in God; that confidence to which every true Christian is most certainly raised up, according to the measure of his faith, to rejoice, or, as the original word properly imports, to boast, and glory in God, through the Lord Jesus Christ; as one is wont to do in a sure and tried friend, who, he certainly knows,

knows, will not disappoint or make him ashamed of his confidence.

This is so near of kin to faith itself, that when it is narrowly looked into, it will be found the very same thing, which is otherwise called faith in God, or so inseparably connected with it, that, where this is wanting, it is impossible to conceive, even of the lowest and most unquestionable actings of faith. Believing, for instance, that God really is such a being as he is represented to us in Christ Jesus, so astonishingly good and gracious, as to give such an unspeakable happiness as eternal life, and in such a manner too, by his own Son and Spirit abiding and dwelling in us; it is impossible, I say, to conceive even of this, without forming the heart, at the same time, into the most ardent love of, and highest confidence; which is no more than a firm trust and dependence on him: A confidence which we make no scruple to found on the promises of a weak man, when we believe him honest, and the thing in his power, upon infinitely lower evidence: “ He that spared not his own Son, but
“ gave him up unto the death for us all,
“ how

“ how shall he not with him also freely
“ give us all things ?”

But be that as it will, the Christian faith must raise the soul to such a confidence in God, because it is a duty the most earnestly enjoined and pressed, and most frequently repeated of any in the whole Bible, both in the Old and New Testament, which we need not stand to repeat, and which we find laid as the foundation of all that Christian courage and resolution which we find so many instances of in both ; and so necessary, that, without it, it would be simply impossible for the Christian to bear up, under the manifold tribulations, temptations, and opposition, from the devil, the world, and the flesh, which our Lord has warned his disciples to lay their account with. And what have they to support and bear them up against all these ? Why, truly, nothing but this, “ Greater is he that is
“ with them, than all that are against
“ them.” Take away their confidence in God, through the Lord Jesus Christ, their courage is gone, their heart fails them, and they become weak and feeble like other men. And no wonder ; for it
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is in the Lord only, and in the power of his might, they are strong: of themselves they can do nothing. Nay it is in this weakness that the Apostle assures us their strength lies: "When I am weak, then am I strong:" and therefore he chuses to glory in nothing but his infirmities and weaknesses.

But how shall faith be raised to such a confidence in him, and such a firmness and strength of mind? And the firmness of believers, both in Old and New Testament times, has been the astonishment and admiration of the world. See Heb. xi. throughout, and compare with these Old-Testament worthies such accounts as we have of the firmness and constancy of the Christian martyrs. The Apostles rejoiced, that they were counted worthy to suffer for the name of Jesus. Paul gives us the mystery of their constancy: "We both labour, and suffer persecution," said he, "because we trust in the living God." But will such a poor loose general faith, such as some contend for, and content themselves with, have this effect; a belief or persuasion that Christ died for mankind in general, or some particular

elect men, and that God so loved the world, that he gave his Son, thus to die for them, while numberless numbers are left, notwithstanding, to perish eternally? No certainly: Nothing can raise our confidence in God, and our personal courage and resolution, but the application of this salvation, and the love from which it proceeded, to ourselves, in the most distinct and particular manner. But,

6. This is the only way wherein we can give God and his Christ the glory that is due unto his name. No body will make any doubt about this being the duty of every Christian, and a very necessary one. It is the great design of faith to do so, and exactly fitted for the purpose it is. It is indeed no more but a belief and acknowledgement, that God is what he has declared and manifested himself to be: That he has done, and will do, what he has really done, and promised to do. And, surely, what does not that, does not deserve the name of faith.

The first step faith takes, is, to give him the glory of his faithfulness, by receiving the record he has made concerning himself and his Son Jesus Christ. The Bible,
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from the beginning to the end of it, is properly a record: it is the history of God, his works in general, and particularly of his ways with the children of men; and by what he has done, the facts there recorded, he manifests himself to us; by this plain simple way he teacheth us what we are to think, and how we are to conceive of him. He reasons indeed upon the facts, and thereby teaches us what use we are to make of them; but the great points of faith are the facts themselves. And the man that either denies any of the facts, or calls in doubt the justness of the conclusions drawn from them, whether directly, or by explaining them away, as many of late have done, makes God a liar as really as they who do not receive the record at all; and do it much more impudently than they, while they allow it to be the record of God, and yet presume to call some parts of it in question: for, surely, it is less dishonourable to the great author, to say, he made not the record; than, after that is admitted, to say, that it is so imperfect and erroneous, that it needs to be rectified by human skill.

There we have God set before us as the author of the first creation, where indeed all our knowledge of him is founded. But we are given likewise to understand, That this world, with all that belongs to it, is but a preparation for, and introduction to, another, and every way a better one: That Jesus Christ is at the head of it, and his business, at present, is to prepare inhabitants for it, from among the poor perishing sons of Adam: That the way he manages is by publishing his great design; bringing life and immortality to light, as he has done in the gospel; calling, pressing, and assuring, in the strongest manner, that no weakness, worthlessness, wickedness, or any disqualification whatever, shall be any hindrance: All these he takes upon himself; and all that is left to them is, to determine, whether they will content themselves with the wretched shadow of life they have, or renounce and give it up now, as they must very soon do whether they will or not, and rest themselves on his creating power for all, and live purely by grace. And if, after all, they find they cannot determine themselves, and cannot

part with a present world ; even that he has taken upon himself to supply, and wants no more but that they will consent to be healed and helped ; and when they cannot do so much as that, he has taken it upon himself to make them willing ; and really does so, in all that receive and believe in his name.

This, it is evident, is all home work, the closest application that can be unto the soul. Nothing like the remote loose measures of moral government, but the immediate application of creating power to every particular Christian who is really brought to believe in Christ. And he has not the glory given him that is due to his name, until all these are acknowledged ; and who can have any reason to imagine he is a believer, who doth not acknowledge them ? Every believer must be qualified to join the Christian worship ; and the Apostle gives us the sum of it, Rev. i. 5. " To him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and made us kings and priests unto God," &c. And, surely, until he is thus acknowledged, he has not the glory given him that is due unto his name : and if he

he is not thus acknowledged, the riches of the glory of his grace, the glory of God shining in the face of Jesus, is not seen and acknowledged; nor can the believer join in these forms of ascribing glory, the glory of his name, to him, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," &c. Nay, without it, one cannot so much as call Jesus Lord, without either ambiguity or hypocrisy.

7. There can be no such thing as communion with God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, on any other foundation, but such a particular application of the declarations, calls, and encouragements, of the gospel, as leads to the dutiful acknowledgements expressed by the Apostle, *Who loved me, and gave himself for me.* There may indeed be a communication of spiritual life, and even of spiritual gifts and powers; these are necessary to qualify for communion: but communion itself, which lies in mutual friendship, in love, and the duties and offices of friendship, in giving and receiving the testimonies, tokens, and evidences of love, is what I here speak of; and in these, it is evident, the Christian

Christian life is in a manner wholly employed.

The first view then, and that which founds all the rest of the Christian's fellowship with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ, lies in giving and receiving; giving on God's part, and receiving on ours. And, poor, and miserable, and wretched, and blind, and naked, as we are, dead in trespasses and sins, we have nothing but what we receive; life, and light, and pardon, and spiritual powers, and provision of every kind, must all come from the hand of the kind Redeemer. Life indeed, and the powers belonging to it, must be wrought in us without any concurrence of ours. But they are given to put us into a capacity of perceiving and feeling the worth of the gift, and all the subsequent evidences of love and friendship. And in receiving these with dutiful acknowledgements, and returns of gratitude, and love, lies the Christian's part: and how this can be done, while he continues insensible, or even doubtful, whether he has received them or not, who can say?

The other part of our communion, which

which arises naturally from this, consists in acts of adoration, worship, and address, to him, as occasions require, in thanksgivings and acknowledgements, prayers and supplications, &c. as tokens of our love to him, and dependence on him, for his gracious returns of acceptance and relief. I need not say, how necessary it is, that all these should proceed from the heart: if it is any worship at all, it is but an expression of that love and thankfulness to God, and that dutiful confidence in him, and dependence on him, for all things which we spoke of already; and which can, by no means, be managed without that confidence of faith we are speaking of, that boldness with which the Christian is directed to come to a throne of grace, and to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus; and which the Apostle directs to be done with full assurance of faith, as those certainly will, who have their hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, Heb. iv. 16. x. 19. & seqq.

There is one circumstance, of prayer particularly, which, by itself, determines the point, viz. that we are directed to address God as our *Father*. So our Lord taught

taught his disciples in that form which he gave them: and it is founded in the state they are exalted to; being no more servants, but sons; and the spirit of sons, which all of them receive, exerting, and enabling them to cry, Abba, Father, Rom. viii. 15. This is opposed to the spirit of bondage, which has no more hold of them, now that they are made free by the Son, and brought into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. By which it appears, with full evidence, that we cannot so much as pray according to the will of God, without this faith in Christ, which acknowledges his dying love to us.

8. We might mention here, that "joy in believing," which the Apostle wishes to the Romans; and which Peter speaks of as a necessary fruit and effect of believing, 1 Pet. i. 8. The importance of this, in the spiritual life, is acknowledged by all, it is the very strength of the soul, Neh. viii. 10. We might likewise take notice of that great effect we find the Apostle attributing to faith, Act. xv. 9. "purifying the heart," and the whole business of holiness and sanctification.

These two have such a necessary connection with, and mutual dependence on, each other, that they might be very properly considered together; and it would be easy to shew how impossible it is to make any thing of either of them, without the particular application of faith we are speaking of. And it is sadly verified in the experience of all who are capable of observing, what a dead lifeless thing Christianity is become, even among the serious professors of it, since mens consciences were soothed with what they call marks of grace, and thence came to be persuaded they might do well enough without the assurance of their interest in Christ. But having spoken already of the foundations both of holiness and comfort, in that peace, and love, and confidence in God, which they are but the fruits of, I will not stand any further on them here. And therefore,

Lastly, I conclude with observing, that this particular application of Christ's dying love is the only thing that can distinguish our faith from the faith of hypocrites, nay and that of the devils themselves. It might be thought odd to
compare

compare the faith of Christians to that of devils; but the Apostle James has taught us to do so in one comprehensive branch of it, James ii. 19. and makes no doubt even to prefer the faith of devils, as it is attended with such a particular application as their circumstances would admit; "they believe and tremble." And when we have examined the whole complex system of divine truth in all the parts of it, there will not be found one single point which they do not know more perfectly, and believe more firmly, than the most orthodox Christian on earth: but they have no interest in these things, unless it be to make them more miserable. Men, Christians especially, have the record of all these things made for their benefit: but if they will not take the advantage of them, by applying them to themselves, they will be more guilty than the devils; and there is no room to doubt of their misery being aggravated in exact proportion to the privileges they have had, and neglected or refused to make the proper advantage of.

I once thought to have illustrated this point

point further, by showing how an awakened self-condemned sinner, upon the brink of despair, is, under the direction of the Spirit of life, raised up to the happy state we speak of, viz. confidence in God through Jesus Christ, and the most endearing and comfortable reflections on his almighty love. But, considering how very various the ways of the Spirit are in these cases, that no one precise method of procedure can be laid down which may answer the experiences of every true believer; and that, in the account we gave of the divine record in the foregoing discourse, and the impressions which the belief of it makes upon the heart, we have already said as much as is necessary on that head; any further enlargement in this place would be superfluous.

It may, perhaps, rather be of more use to inquire, how it has come to pass, that this particular application of gospel-grace, the love of Christ, and the Father in him, comes to be so much overlooked by the generality of Christians among us.

We have already given some general hints about it; we shall here consider it somewhat more particularly. And this

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is the more necessary, because the great objection which lies against this particular application, and, in effect, the sole foundation of the opposite opinion, is, that this is contrary to the common experience of Christians. But when we pretend to build any thing upon the experience of Christians, we had need to know well who and what sort of Christians they are. Reasoning from experience in these cases, is like judging by precedent; both may happen to be against law. The approved examples we have recorded in scripture we may safely follow, because they are illustrations of the rule: but no after ages have any such privilege. The Apostle Paul himself advises Christians to be followers even of him, so far only as he was a follower of Christ. And indeed it generally falls out, that, when people make precedents and example the rule, and forsake the law and rule they should judge by, they have some other purposes in view than truth and justice. Let us consider them a little. And,

1. It is certain, there are great numbers of men who call themselves Christians, who are so grossly ignorant of the gospel,

spel, and especially of the exercises and actings of faith in Christ, and at the same time so regardless of all that belongs to Christianity in their practice, that they differ nothing from Heathens, except that they happened to be baptized when infants, and exceed them in wickedness. Multitudes of these are so grossly profane, that their example or experiences are minded by no body, unless it be to avoid them, and beware of treading in their steps. Others are more sober, while yet no body takes them for serious Christians. And how shall we know where to stop? There is a thing called *charity*, a term which has got into our translation of the Bible, where the original word signifies *Christian love*, which indeed covers a multitude of faults. By the help of this blinding perspective, we may imagine we find multitudes of good Christians who are hardly good enough to pass for hypocrites or pretenders to Christianity. Mens hearts we cannot see; a form of godliness, without either the life or the power of it, may yet be so complete a form, that no man can discern the difference. And how hard must it be for those who delude themselves into a persuasion

suasion that they are very good Christians, and for those who in charity reckon them such, to believe, that there is any thing essential to faith which they themselves are strangers to. And in this they are doubly unhappy. Thus those who take them to be good Christians are led into the same snare, and never attempt to rise higher than such and such very good men do.

2. There is another sort of men who are yet more dangerous, as their abilities and reputation are greater than ordinary Christians: men who set up for teachers and instructors of others, while themselves are strangers to the nature of the gospel, and the power of godliness. Many of these have been men of great natural abilities, with all the advantages of human learning: and when they are likewise of unblameable lives, as many of them have had a rigid monkish austerity, much beyond what true Christianity either requires or admits, their assertions come with redoubled weight; and it is the hardest thing in the world to persuade those who are strangers to Christianity, that such men can be mistaken; especially

ly when mens corruption is handsomely
foothed, by making the way to heaven
more easy than Christ and his Apostles
have made it.

Such a man was Pelagius of old: not
that he was the first who corrupted the
gospel of Christ; but the most remarkable,
from whom the men of that way took
their name. His capital error was, mista-
king the constitution of grace for a plan
of moral government; and obedience to
the divine laws for the only way to the
favour of God and eternal life. Hence
he concluded, that every man must be
furnished with sufficient powers for obe-
dience: all depended on the man's free
will; and there was no occasion for grace,
but to encourage and reward obedience a-
bove its real and intrinsic desert and worth.
And were it true, that the constitution
of grace was only a perfect plan of moral
government, and no new creation-work,
as many conceive of it to this day, Pe-
lagius's scheme was certainly a right one.

But when he appeared, as the doctrine
of grace was yet preserved, not only in
the notions, but in the hearts, of Chri-
stians, his scheme was universally con-
demned;

demned; and, down to this day, no body cares for taking up in terms, what was, in those primitive times, condemned as heresy: and yet great numbers proceed upon the same original plan of moral government, viz. obedience to the laws of Christ, which they term the gospel, and the powers of what they call free will. They save themselves from the charge of Pelagianism, by bringing in the word *grace*; but with them it is the same thing that he called *nature*: and on this plan, as no man could be sure of his perseverance unto the death, he could never be sure of eternal life until he came there. And, for the love of Christ, and his death, with them it is a common theme, That they who are eternally damned, have just as much interest in both, while in this world, as the best saint in heaven.

Nay, and even among those who maintain the speciality of Christ's love, and the efficacy of his death, who attribute nothing to nature, but all to grace, there are many who will not allow the assurance of particular application to be any of the direct acts of faith, but to be inferred by reflection on what they find in themselves;

partly because they cannot perceive what they reckon a rational foundation for it in the state of the gospel, as it lies before us; and partly from a tenderness they have for weak believers, and what, they think, is the experience of true Christians. The warrants the Christian has for particular application, and the experience of Christians, we have met with already; and for weak serious souls, the tenderness they speak of is the most cruel thing that can be done to them, as it has a direct tendency to sooth them at best in a state of imperfection, and make them careless about advancing, and, which is yet worse, puts them in a way where it is simply impossible they can ever attain any settled assurance. It is by the marks of grace they find in themselves, they must gather up their interest in Christ. But these, at best, are so imperfect, that no lasting assurance can be founded upon them; and no wonder they are kept in uncertainty all their lives who lay the foundation of their assurance in themselves. But however that is, so long as men teach thus, so long will ordinary Christians, or rather those who are on the way to be such, sooth

footh themselves in their unbelief and doubting, supposing that the want of assurance is their unhappiness, but not their sin; assurance itself being a high attainment, far above the reach of common Christians. And when they have such authorities, it is no wonder, that the slightest temptations should prevail to keep them in that unhappy state of doubt and uncertainty.

3. This is much helped forward by the unhappy divisions, and the sects and parties, that are formed among Christians. It is impossible, in this imperfect state, that ever we shall attain such measures of knowledge, that all, even real Christians, shall be of the same mind. Peter and Paul, Paul and Barnabas, had their differences; but they knew where to stop. There are, without question, greater and lesser matters in the gospel-state, as well as in the law, some essential, some only circumstantial, where men may, and, as matters stand, must differ. Good and godly men have, in their zeal for truth, often put more upon some points than ever they were designed to bear; nay good men may mistake so far as to take things for truths of God, which yet are no more

than their own imaginations. And yet it is commonly on these disputed points that Christians, very honest Christians, bestow their zeal, and count it zeal for the Lord. Those who would be Christians, but are not yet acquainted with the spirit and power of Christianity, perceiving those whom they reckon the best Christians most intent upon the party-truths, reckon these the main things; and as a very warm zeal for these is easily attained, they are entered into a party instead of Christ, and count themselves something beyond others, while in reality they are nothing. Thus, the leaders unhappily mispending that labour on externals which should have cultivated the spirit and power of religion, hurt themselves, and mislead multitudes, even while they are so far in the right way.

4. I only mention the corruption that is in the world through lust; a bundle which contains a multitude of destroyers, to the misleading and ruining the bulk of Adam's children. These are natural blindness, and corrupt biases, the course of a very corrupt world, with which we all stand very strongly connected, and especially

cially the powerful working of an unseen, but cruel and unrelenting adversary, who "goeth about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour;" and whose sole aim it is, to keep souls from Christ. This cunning foe will give men no trouble, go as far as they will in the strictest morality, in the most fervent form of devotion, in the greatest mortification and good works: if he can but keep them from Christ, from the rest which faith finds in his dying love, he knows his work is done. And in fact the most austere professors of morality, natural devotion, (that is, such as has no regard to Christ), and good works, are the most implacable enemies to the faith of Christ, and living by faith.

5. I shall only add one other cause of that unhappy mistake. The serious soul, distressed with a feeling sense of sin, doth often too hastily catch at ease and relief, before God's time to reveal the rest which he has prepared in his Son, and the wonders of his dying love: and there is seldom wanting some over-tender friend to hold out some slender twig for him to hang by. It is no small mercy to a soul
where

where God breaks such hurtful holds, which keep them from that anchor which is cast within the vail, sure and stedfast; which may and which only can be safely trusted to, Heb. vi. 19.

AND now the natural improvement of all that we have said, is, to rectify mistakes about Christianity, and the Christian life which we profess; to give us just and proper apprehensions of it, wherein it lies, and how it is attained; to be a directory to us in our heavenly course; and, at the same time, furnish us with the most powerful and prevalent motives. I thought once to have extended these into proper heads, and drawn out a sort of sketch under each of them; but having so far exceeded the measure I designed, and the whole being laid with these these views, it would be but repeating again what I have been saying, and much of it oftener than once from the beginning. Only as the last appears to be of so very great moment, as in effect the whole Christian life, at least the vigour and activity of it, depends on it, I shall lay together a few considerations for impressing
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our hearts with a dutiful regard to it, both on account of the manifold evils that attend our stopping short, and the unspeakable advantages of keeping the dying love of our Redeemer, in the most particular application of it, in our view.

The unhappiness of those who stop short of the Apostle's faith, will appear from the following considerations.

I. It is resting in a very sinful way. Most miserably are they mistaken who reckon it only a piece of unhappiness, and no fault of theirs. In some cases indeed it may be so. In the first conversion of a sinner, and his entrance into the spiritual life, his wise conductor may have very great and very kind purposes to answer, by keeping him in uncertainty about his state, and what may be the event. The same case may fall out in other periods of it, as it shall please that Spirit on whom he depends, to withdraw his light, in which only a saving interest in Christ can be seen. It is not the simple want of it I call a sin, but wilfully resting and soothing one's self in it. This is unbelief; it is neglecting the most valuable part of Christ's salvation; it is undervaluing his love;

love; and, which is worst of all, impeaching his faithfulness, and despising his authority.

2. It is most foolish to rest in an uncertainty in a matter of such moment, and where there is so much danger. You dare not say, *Christ has loved me, and given himself for me*; that, you think, would be presumption; then as certainly you dare not say but you may be damned eternally, and that the wrath of God abides on you. You will say, you hope it is otherwise. But what is the foundation of your hope? You can have none but in the love of Christ, and his having died for you. If you say you hope so, is that enough? It says you are not sure, and is that a condition to be rested in? There cannot be a surer sign of one's being yet in the gall of bitterness, and the bond of iniquity, than to rest our eternal salvation on such an uncertain hope, and live easy under it.

3. It renders one incapable of many of the principal duties of the Christian life, and very weak and feeble in all. I had occasion to show, how incapable it makes one of the love of God and Christ, of confidence

fidence in him, and giving him the glory that is due unto his name: and what is religion without these, but an empty shadow, and dead form? And even in the outward duties of life, whether toward God, or man, our strength, our courage, is gone, like Samson when he lost his hair: How easily are we overcome! What a poor pitiful case is this! And hence,

4. This is the great, and in effect the only cause, of that barrenness and unfruitfulness which are so apparent in professors of this stamp. And how can it be otherwise? There can be no fruit in the branches, but by sap derived from the root. It is by abiding in Christ that the best Christian can thrive: if he lives not in him, he must die. It is only by the confidence of faith, or particular application for one's self, that any man can abide in him. That cannot be done, but by perceiving and believing his love. It is love only that can beget love: and it is from this inward spring that all our fruit flows. Love is the fulfilling of the whole law; and, without it, no duty can be done. And how dreadful the end of unfruitfulness and barrenness in the Lord's

vineyard is, appears from what is written, John xv. 2. 6. "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he (the husbandman) taketh away;" and they are cast out and wither, and are gathered and burned.

But, on the other hand, where the love of Christ, and of the Father in him, is known and believed, how happy the man! For,

1. It is a very heaven upon earth; peace, safety, confidence, and joy in the Holy Ghost; all the pleasures of love elevated and exalted to the highest pitch, something greatly above the most perfect friendship, and that is the most exalted enjoyment the world knows any thing of. "This is my beloved, and this is my friend." How superlatively happy! All fears, all sorrows, all cares, are effectually prevented, and set aside for ever.

2. It breaks the force and strength of every temptation. So says the Apostle, "the shield of faith quenches all the fiery darts of the devil." It does so effectually, by the protection it puts the soul under in Christ; it does so, by the sense and feeling of our happiness in him. The world, and all that Satan can find there

to

to bait his snares and gins with, are nothing; the victory over that is complete; it is crucified to the man in Christ, and he is crucified to it.

3. It reconciles the soul to every lot, and makes the circumstances which, in the eye of the world, are most contemptible and disagreeable, perfectly easy and pleasing. It gives perfect contentment, and that is more than the possession of the whole world can do.

4. It makes one useful in the world; recommends the ways of Christ, and adorns the doctrine of the gospel; gives a good example, and a convincing evidence of the truth and reality of religion. And,

5. It is the way, the only way, to prepare the heirs of glory, and to make them fit for heaven. Their conversation is there; there is their treasure, and there is their heart; and their business here is but to wait all the days of their appointed time, until their change come; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearance of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

But how shall we attain so happy a state?

state? It is in God's hand, it is a gift of his grace; and until he shall be pleased to bestow it, and to give that Spirit of faith which leads into all truth, vain are all the attempts of man.

They are indeed so; and if ever we propose to prosper, we must lay this as a foundation, "That of ourselves we can do nothing;" and never flatter ourselves so far as to place any dependence upon the outward means of grace, however careful and diligent we are in the use of them; as very careful and diligent we will be, if we are indeed in earnest. Neither must we expect any thing from man, not from the best Christians or ministers; though their assistance is not to be neglected. Our eyes must be on him alone who is the light and life of man.

But, at the same time, he has laid down a way which he has promised to bless, and it is the way of faith; and he has warranted us to go on in an absolute dependence on and entire confidence in him, whatever difficulties and discouragements we may meet with in our way. And indeed we may be put to wait long, and even meet with many things that look like
absolute

absolute refusals, as the woman of Canaan did. But we have this for our encouragement, That never any followed and waited, (for faith has always patience for its companion, Heb. vi. 12. x. 36. They that believe, never make haste); never any, I say, waited, but in the end had their errand and more. Himself hath said, "Him that cometh to me, I will in
" no wise cast out."

The only direction then I would give, is that which God gave Moses for the Israelites when they were in the most desperate case men could be in, shut up between the Egyptians and the Red sea: "Speak unto the children of Israel, that
" they go forward." This, we find, was the Apostle Paul's practice: "Forgetting
" the things that are behind, and mind-
" ing only those things which are before,
" I press toward the mark, for the prize
" of the high calling of God in Christ Je-
" sus," Phil. iii. 15. And thus he exhorts us, Heb. vi. 12. "That we be not slothful,
" but followers of them, who through faith
" and patience inherit the promises."

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